

Femme Fatales

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CLEA DUVAL
"THE FACULTY"

The sexiest one of all,
Batgirl Yvonne Craig,
on the '60s TV hijinx
Friday **BATMAN**

SCI-FI'S ALLTIME FIFTY SEXIEST FIGURES

CARRIE FISHER

NICHELLE NICHOLS

JULIE NEWMAN

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Volume 2 Number 10

043



Femme Fatales



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You won't want to miss our next bi-weekly issue previewing the making of **CARRIE 2**, which won't hit theatre screens until July 1994! Our on the set reporter interviewed director Kari Shue and Amy Irving, who returns from the original, and provides a behind-the-scenes look at updating the scary Stephen King shocker. And also in the same issue, Clea DuVall and the filming of **THE FACULTY**, Annabella Gowers on starring opposite Robin Williams in **WHAT DREAMS MAY COME**, Terry Moore on the original **NIGHT JOE YOUNG** and her cameo in the re-make, Anne Heche on filming Janet Leigh's bio in the re-make of **PSYCHO**, plus our sizzling personal of **DENTIST II** star Jillean McWhirter. Subscribe today!

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THE FACULTY

A LITTLE WITCH REAPPEARS IN A KEVIN WILLIAMSON PIC.

BY JON KEEYES



Meet *THE FACULTY*'s student body: DuVall (second from left) w/ Josh Hartnett, Jordana Brewster & Elijah Wood. "It's not about blood and guts," vows DuVall

"I'm not hitting on you," says Clea DuVall, "but do you want to go in my trailer?" Deciding not to stand outside on a muggy, Texas evening, I accept...

Once inside, DuVall—driven by "way too much espresso"—begins pacing the trailer frantically. Enjoying the air-conditioning and wondering if she'll ever stop moving, I ask DuVall

side, the cheer of a thousand extras erupts on the set of *THE FACULTY*. For Clea DuVall, the movie—directed by Robert Rodriguez (*FROM DUSK TILL DAWN*)—is her opportunity to deflect the *LITTLE WITCHES* legacy and shift her career into fast forward.

Caustically revealing only a succinct description of the movie's plot, DuVall becomes like everyone else on the set: lips sealed. "Everything around here is top-secret," she explains. "*THE FACULTY* is about teenagers and something that takes over their high school, and they have to battle it. I would classify *THE FACULTY* more as a thriller than horror, since it's not about blood and guts. I think, on a whole, it's more intelligent than standard horror films, at least [the ones with] low-budgets—you know, the whole 'What are they doing? Why are they naked?' thing." One top secret, regarding the film's central scenario, has been leaked: an alien force has infected the faculty of the school, but the real question is which actor is actually playing the alien. More than ten characters are critical to the story, so it's anybody's guess who the villain will be.

Rodriguez volunteers his own interpretation: "*THE*

FACULTY is one of those 'Are you, you?' kind of movies. It's an *INVASION OF THE BODY SNATCHERS* type of film involving conformity and individuality in high school, the best setting for this kind of movie. I was always a fan of those movies. *THE THING* was one of the best 'Are you, you' kind of movies."

It was the creative impetus that initially drew DuVall to the project. "I really wanted the opportunity to work with Robert Rodriguez and [co-writer] Kevin Williamson," says the actress. "I love everything that Kevin has written. You will definitely see Robert's touch. It's very unique. There are certain little 'Robert things,' from what I've seen, that mean so much—like a certain look. I think Robert just has a gift for making everything look cool. And Robert is the coolest guy I have ever met."

Rehearsals were launched, last April, upon DuVall's arrival in Austin: "I play Stokley. She's kind of the outsider, loner, slacker, hate-everyone-in-school girl. Basically, she's a rebel here..."

"My character is a lot like I was when I was 14 or 15:

dark, brooding, discontent. She's a very strong girl, but not quite self-assured yet because she's still trying to figure out who she is...and I'm passed that. I feel like there's some huge differences except for the inner-strengths. She also goes through a change, so I'm more like her towards the end than earlier in the film. Not to mention that I'm hyper and she's not like that."

While rehearsing, DuVall quickly realized she would have to make some internal changes to develop a genuine rapport with Stokley. "My own perception," she notes, "was really about letting go of a lot, and learning to do more things spontaneously...and not preconceiving anything because a lot happens in this movie that I had never seen before, because it doesn't exist. You have to go to a different place, and allow a lot more and accept a lot more. And just figuring out how to not overact, and how to make it real because *LITTLE WITCHES* doesn't count. It was my first movie and I had no clue what I was doing. I mean, my God, I worked in a coffee house while that film was being shot."



DuVall's featured scene is explosive. Who, among the faculty, is the alien?

about her debut film, *LITTLE WITCHES*. This stops her dead in her tracks. "How did you know about *LITTLE WITCHES*? You've seen it?" So you've seen my son! Oh my God, I can't believe this. I did that movie when I was 18."

Well, with the the icon finally broken, DuVall settles into a chair and appears to relax for a moment. Out-

OF THE LOST WORLD, PHOENIX THE WARRIOR, MEGAFORCE, in it. Her first role was an Indian ambassador in the TV pilot of LUIS & CLARK: THE NEW ADVENTURES OF SUPERMAN.

●Nancy Gideon, author of the *Midnight* series of romantic vampire novels, has penned a horror script for Katharsys Pictures called *SPRINGHEEL JACK*. The title is one of the nicknames applied to a legendary killer of prostitutes. Producer Lisa M. Dickinson explains that even to a familiar story: "We explored different possibilities of who Jack the Ripper is and where he came from. We came up with an idea about the religion of Druids. The Druids believed in immortality and sacrificial rites. There were a lot of similarities between Dead Beats and the Ripper murders, and we explored that angle. Nancy did amazing things with the screenplay. It's very dark and really, really cool." At the center of our story is a married couple. The wife has the coolest part. Her husband, an ex-Chicago cop, got a little too involved in a serial murder case, so they move to a resort island and the wife starts a bad & beautiful. Her character has a lot of very dark twists through the course of the movie."

Jack the Ripper is a hot commodity in Hollywood right now. Linda Hazzam, director of Full Moon's *DARK ANGEL: THE ASCENT*, has penned an unsolicited script—also called *SPRINGHEEL JACK*—with *CANDYMAN* scribe Bernard Rose. The film was originally being developed by Lakeshore Pictures, but has gone into turnaround since that production company experienced financial troubles. Other Jack the Ripper

Julie Strain, who teams with ROWDY GIRLS, dresses in with/with/with Kevin Soriano, Shannon Tweed co-stars



Marina Morgan stars in *CARMILLA*, a vampire vampire vignette, as an abused wife who smelts blood. "Once I become a vampire, I'm no longer the victim."

projects in development include Allen and Albert Hughes' *FROM HELL*, and *THE DIARY OF JACK THE RIPPER*, which will reportedly star Anthony Hopkins.

Gideon's *SPRINGHEEL JACK* marks the sophomore effort of Katharsys Pictures, a small production company based in Kalamazoo, MI. Their debut project, a sci-fi/horror drama called *IN THE WOODS*, was released on home video last October, by BC Entertainment. The film's premise involves a group of the fighters who uncover a cluster of medieval creatures living in the present day.

●Quit queen Michelle Bauer (40) just can't seem to shake show business. The actress reports that she's no longer interested in pursuing a movie career—check last issue's editorial—but the calls keep pouring in. "I'm not looking for this stuff, and I don't even want it," says the mystified actress. "But the work just keeps coming my way, so I guess I'll just keep accepting it." Bauer recently approved a role in Surrender Cinema's sex/suicide collection, *TIMEGATE TALES OF THE*

SADDLE TRAMPS. "I play Miss Mann, a saloon madam," grins Bauer. "It's a very comical part. There's a love scene in it with another girl." Directed by Dan Golden, *TRAMPS* merges time-travel with horse opera: three modern-day girls, on route to a small western town by stagecoach, are mistaken for hookers from a century ago.

●Julie Strain also wrapped a western, this one for producer Indie Allen (7'8") whose previous credit—*CHOSEN ONE: LEGEND OF THE RAVEN*—stems Carmen Electra (5'9"). Allen's latest, *ROWDY GIRLS*, stars B-diva Strain as an outlaw on the lam. "Shannon Tweed (7'5"), myself, and another Playmate, Deanna Burke, are the players," says Strain. "I play a bad girl. One day I let three people—and I didn't even have PMS, imagine that. We take guns and ride horses and rob a stagecoach. Shannon plays a nun. There's money and murder involved in this period piece from the 1800s. All in all, it was a great shoot." The film was originally titled *A BLONDE, A NUN AND A GUN*.

●Caught up with Stan Eckert, who called me from the set of *THE DEBTORS*, she landed a small but decorative role in the \$14 million production as a fashion model. The eclectic cast includes Randy Quaid, Michael Clarke, Phyllis Diller and Catherine McCormack. Ms. Eckert is also employed by Disney—yep, the blonde bombshell voices *The Little Mermaid* for the studio's web site (www.disney.com). You might also catch her in some porno spots for the Web network and in print ads for Camel cigarettes. On-screen, the model/starlet is decidedly more active in the likes of *ARRANGED MARRIAGE, JUST WIFE, BIKINI TRAFFIC SCHOOL*, and *KISSING A DREAM*.

●Production on Kevin Summerfield's *CARMILLA* has wrapped, but no one's breaking out the champagne just yet. The director experienced strong opposition from producers, cast and crew while filming this adaptation of the 1872 vampire novel by Sheridan Le Fanu. Why all the hubbub? "It was an incredible, huge, month-long challenge," concedes Summerfield. "I think everyone, except for me and one of the actresses, had the expectation of getting involved in a low-budget B-movie with the traditional T&A and gore. Traditionally, when you do a very low-budget film like this, it's point and shoot and 'Everybody get naked and tam it up.' I could have gone for total cheese, but I opted to do something different. If you're familiar with the original story, there's very little that has to do with vampires at all. It really deals with a relationship between the characters Carmilla and Laura and themes like spousal abuse and loss of a loved one. I tried to make that project a little more character-driven, and a little more realistic. I didn't want a 10-shot every five minutes, and I think it was hard getting that across to everyone else."

Marina Morgan, cast as a victimized spouse who becomes evil (aided by Carmilla), supports Summerfield. "In the movie, I am really abused sexually by my husband and becoming a vampire is my only way out. Once I become a vampire, I'm no longer a victim," Ms. Morgan is filming Earth Tison Tridgiers' *KEEPER OF THE HOUSE*. Based on a novel by Rebecca T. Godwin, the film is a 20-year chronicle of a brother and his occupants. "It's really great—a real relationship piece,"

continued on page 46

Posing as (Shane of the Jungle for London Night Studios, Sheri Robert also performs, off-screen, as *The Little Mermaid* voice on Disney web site), on-screen, she's a dirty work



50 SEXIEST FIGURES IN SCIENCE FICTION

A FEMME—THE CHIEF OF OUR L.A. BUREAU—EXAMINED ALMOST 100 YEARS OF FILM TO DETERMINE HER CHOICES.

BY LAURA SCHIFF

"Any girl can be glamorous. All you have to do is stand still and look stupid."

—actress *Hedy Lamarr*
Glamour is icy and bereft of emotion. It's the alluring spell of cool charm and romance that can only be cast from a distance. Furthermore, glamour should not be confused with sex appeal: while glamour repels, sex attracts. And though some say that sensuousness is evoked by merely standing still and looking stupid, I insist that the brain is a primary erogenous zone.

The women on this list have been chosen because they project the three B's: brains, beauty, and bravery. When weighing in on the "sexiness" barometer, each of these exponents should be proportionately correlated. A brain without the bravery to execute one's thoughts is weak and invalid. Bravery without brains is myopic and stupid. Beauty without bravery, or brains, is sexed. And, upon reading this list, some of you will be *lived*. Put it in a letter to the editor, baby. Sexy is never having to say you're sorry.



Carrie Fisher as Princess Leia in *RETURN OF THE JEDI* (1983). A drop-out from a private high school, she admits, "I had a slight English accent in *STAR WARS*. Part of the village. It's hilarious to me now but, back then, it was humiliating."

1 YVONNE CRAIG

Holy heroines! As Batgirl in the original *BATMAN* series (1967-68), Yvonne Craig was a sign of changing times. Her *Beetman*-turned-sagittaria supervixen was a metaphor for the era's female empowerment movement—not to mention the embodiment of a universal sexual fantasy. Craig's Batgirl had brains, beauty, and bobs—ovaries, that is. No strutting vixen, this bat could hold her own against any male opponent—hell, on several occasions, she even rescued the Boy Wonder and the big guy. And she did it all with grace and a sense of humor—not to mention stiletto-heeled boots! Today's surfeit of live action comic book superheroes owe it all to this grade dame of yesterday. Give a lady a cool motorcycle, and a purple Spandex body suit, and she'll seek it to 'em every time. POW!

2 CARRIE FISHER

I suspect someone's been *ostentatious*. Carrie Fisher from these lists? Hey, we're talking royalty here! Where would the *STAR WARS* franchise be sans Princess Leia's nothing-scarens and "anything-is-possible" attitude? Okay, she looks like she's wearing two



A curvy crusader on the BATMAN television series, Franca Piegari poses out of uniform. Her favorite episode? "Enter Batgirl, Kill Penguin (8/14/87). I loved the whole concept."



cheese danishes on her head. She still butt heads with intergalactic badass Darth Vader and gave her best shot at saving Alderson. And Elia Majesty looked great blasting away Stormtroopers, too. Fisher reigns in my book.

3 GILLIAN ANDERSON

Last season, on Fox's *X-FILES*, we started to see another side of FBI agent Dana Scully. Previously, Ms. Anderson's sexuality was undermired. Scully's work was her entire life and she was all but blind to the messy charms of her partner, Fox Mulder (David Duchovny). Scully was always relegated to the role of the no-nonsense skeptic, the "just-the-facts" medical scientist who demanded concrete proof of the paranormal. Lately, though, Scully seems to be lightening up a little. Take, for instance, the fifth season's "vampire" episode, "Bad Blood." Was that Scully flirting with a hunky local sheriff? Was she actually cracking wise while performing an autopsy? She appears to be a bit warmer and more casual, while still maintaining her strength and smarts. Last summer's *X-FILES* movie planted a seed of romance between Scully and Mulder. I'm hoping for it to bloom.

For 3 consecutive years, Gillian Anderson was nominated for a Golden Globe (Best Actress); she won in '97.



SCIFI'S SEXIEST

YVONNE CRAIG, #1

BULLET BRAS, 3-DAY SHOOTS & THE BEST LINE YOU NEVER HEARD.

BY BOB GARCIA

April/May, 1966: It was incumbent upon *Batman* editor Julius Schwartz to resurrect Batgirl, a character who was originally introduced in the DC comic book during the 1950s. The BATMAN television spin-off had premiered to huge Nielsen ratings; maybe the female audience would cross over to the comic book with the addendum of a heroine. "I conceived of Batgirl and plotted it with my writer Gardner Fox," said Schwartz. "The background of her being Commissioner Gordon's daughter was all part of the story. The artist, Carmine Infantino, came up with the costume and the motorcycle. Carmine and Gardner did a story called 'The Million Dollar Debut of Batgirl' which appeared in *Detective Comics* #365."

BATMAN's executive producer Bill Dozier was sent a proof of the comic, and promptly pushed for Batgirl to be embodied on his series. Designers Patricia Burt and Jan Kemp whipped up a costume, which producer Howie Horwitz reportedly had trouble okaying because he was color-blind. A former ballet dancer, 39-year-old Yvonne Craig, bagged the role.

A 7-minute presentation reel, featuring Batgirl, was shot to sell her casting to affiliates and advertisers: BATMAN's ratings dropped in its second season, and the curvy heroine was promoted as the catalyst for improved Nielsen. The plot: Craig as Batgirl—abducted by caped crusader Batman (Adam West) and Robin (Burt Ward)—rescue an abducted millionaire from the Killer Moth (Tim Herbert).

Craig's costume went through several revisions. "The first time I put it on, it was made of an almost girlie-like fabric. It was not really as thick as neoprene but was somewhat constricting," recalled Craig. "Howie Horwitz



Craig, not a fan of the series when she was cast as BATMAN's female counterpart, performed her own motorcycle stunts. The actress notes that Batgirl was initially conceptualized as "much more flirtatious, with a droll sense of humor."

took one look at me in it, and said to Pat [Barto], 'One of the reasons... No, actually, two of the reasons we hired her are being impeded by this costume. The fabric is just smothering her down.' These were in the days of bullet bras, these old pointy things. So she cut it on the bias and it became quite comfortable and looked good."

One change in Batgirl—from presentation reel to series—bothered Craig. And it wasn't the costume. "She was much more flirtatious," said Craig. "And she had a lot more droll sense of humor than ever got written into the character on the show."

By the third season, the production company had slipped into a comfortable schedule. "We shot an episode in three days," said Craig. "We would start on Monday, finish it on Wednesday, start another one on Thursday, finish it on Tuesday."

"You're in makeup around 6:30 a.m., and you're shooting around 8:00 a.m. Then we stayed there late. They were long days but wonderful days, so I never minded. They were a great crew." Craig acquired a nickname on the show, an honor usually reserved for

the crew, not the cast: "Tom Busch, publicist for [20th Century] Fox, used to call me B.B. Everybody thought that it was for Batbrood. But he told me it was because I have such huge front teeth—it really stood for Bucky Beaver."

Craig recalled that Adam West had trouble remembering his lines as Batman. "I don't know why he couldn't, but he just couldn't," said Craig. "I had this long, long, long [speech] in the *London Towers* episode. It was a page of dialogue, ending with, 'It's in the possession of Barnaby Cots, d-d-may-clothier of London.'"

Then Adam was supposed to say, 'Let's go.' I got to the end of it, and there was dead silence. So I said, 'Adam, wake up!' He said 'Oh, oh, I'm sorry. What am I supposed to say?' I was so annoyed with him! So I said, 'You're supposed to say, 'To the cuthouse!' and then we leave.' So that's what he said!"

"In those days, you couldn't have said that but he said it and we didn't cover it. Nobody paid attention. The next day, Howie Horwitz and Bill D'Angelo came down on the set looking like thunder."

"They said, 'We just came from dailies and you said, 'To the cuthouse!' You can't say, 'To the cuthouse!' You're supposed to say, 'Let's go.' We can't use that now!' Adam was standing there looking completely bewildered. And I said to him, 'Oh, Adam! That is disgusting!' And I left."

Craig is genuinely surprised with the cult adoration prompted by the BATMAN series: "I don't think that any of us dreamed that, 30 years later, we would even be talking about it. It was a wonderful, fun job that you couldn't believe they were paying you to do. But it was a job." □

SCI-FI'S SEXIEST

CARRIE FISHER, #2

A GENRE ICON DISCUSSES HER LIFE AFTER "STAR WARS."

By LAURA SCHIFF

"When I read the script for *STAR WARS*, I not only wanted to do it but I wanted to play Han Solo's part," declares Carrie Fisher. The feisty actress was 19 years old when she was cast as Princess Leia in George Lucas' sci-fi saga. During that period, Hollywood scuttlebutt suggested that Sissy Spacek was likely to play Leia and that Fisher was a shoe-in for *CARRIE*, the tormented telekinetic eventually played by Spacek. Fisher, however, squelches the rumor that the actresses conceded to switch roles. "[Director] Brian DePalma was casting *CARRIE* at the same time that George was casting *STAR WARS*," recounts the actress. "[Carrie and Leia were] the same age girl. And so we did the casting at the same time. They were either going to go with someone really pretty or they were going to go with someone forceful. They went with me and they told me to lose ten pounds. I weighed only like 105, [but] I really felt like I was lucky to have the job."

It was the overture to Fisher's 6-year career as the sassy, gum-biting leader of the Rebel Alliance. Mouthy-off cheeky bon mots ("You'll never get this bucket of bolts past that blockade"), Fisher admits that her character's balley demeanor hit close to home. "I think I have a very combative personality," she says. "I didn't think it was odd that he cast me in the role. Lucas cast us for our personalities, and our ability to clash or not."

Fisher already had plenty of practice in that arena. The daughter of singer Eddie Fisher and actress Debbie Reynolds, the then 2-year-old offspring saw her father abandon the family to marry newly-widowed Eliza-



Reeling her head with Princess Leia, sci-fi/surrealist author Carrie Fisher enjoys some rights. Her unabridged interview appears in a future *FF* issue.

beth Taylor. Reynolds later remarried a womanizing business tycoon with a penchant for drinking and gambling. He lost all the family's money right around the time that Fisher was struggling through poverty. By the time she was eleven, she'd acquired a manic-depressive disorder and, later, an addiction to Percodan and LSD. Fisher overdosed in 1985, and turned her rehab experiences into a novel called *Postcards from the Edge*...

The book turned into a best seller, which Fisher adapted into a critically acclaimed 1990 movie. Soon after, Steven Spielberg tapped her to rewrite Tinkerbell's dialogue in his *Peter Pan*

revision, *HOOK*. While making those modifications, Fisher was invited by George Lucas to write a television episode of *THE INDIANA JONES CHRONICLES*. "George is incredibly visual," she says. "There's different kinds of ways of expressing yourself, and George has an extraordinary visual conception. I have my metaphors. They're visual, but they're still verbal. So when it comes to writing dialogue, George and I disagreed. We had those little boxes where you could push a button and they said, 'Fuck you, eat shit, you're an asshole.' And we just were pushing those at each other, and that's how it kind of disintegrated. I finally got my way but then he rewrote me, I think. George is George. Both he and Steven are very, clear about what they want."

Fisher's filmography also includes *HANNAH AND HER SISTERS*, *WHEN HARRY MET*

SALLY, *SHAMPOO*, *AUSTIN POWERS*, et al. As a script doctor, she's rewritten *OUTBREAK*, *LETHAL WEAPON 3* and *THE RIVER WILD*; she's wrapped two additional novels, *Surrender the Pink* and *Delusions of Grandma*. Rumors notwithstanding, Fisher denies that she's working on the *STAR WARS* EPISODE I script with George Lucas: "As his friend, I read it but I did not nit and tinker with it." Fisher has been sworn to secrecy regarding details of the story.

These days, she's busy playing the role of mommy to her 5-year-old daughter and writing *THREE OLD BROADS*, a feature film for Disney. □

4 NICHELLE NICHOLS

Cast as Communications Officer Lt. Uhura in the original *STAR TREK* series (1966-69), Nichelle Nichols introduced an African-American ethnicity to sci-fi. Sure, her character hailed aliens but she could also sing, hoof it and—in episodes like “Gamemasters of Triskelion”—take it out with the best of ‘em. Uhura often utilized her beauty as a tactical weapon: Nichols’ gains, unveiled via her signature mini-skirts, even drew viewers who’d prefer to spend an eternity in Hell rather than a half hour at a Trekkie convention. During the racially charged era in which the series aired, Nichols’ assertive character was sometimes translated as a threat to mainstream audiences. The actress submitted her resignation when she learned that the studio was withholding her fan mail. Nichols later returned to the Paramount sound stage when Martin Luther King, Jr. personally convinced her that Uhura was too rousant a role to deny. After NBC pulled the plug on *STAR TREK*, Nichols appeared in several movie spin-offs: *ST. THE MOTION PICTURE*, *THE WRATH OF KHAN*, *THE SEARCH FOR SPOCK*, *THE VOYAGE HOME*, *THE FINAL FRONTIER*, *UNDISCOVERED COUNTRY*.

5 LYNDA CARTER

Ten years after Batgirl (Eloise Greig, #1) flew into living rooms across America, Lynda Carter’s *WONDER WOMAN* cleared the way for the next generation of superheroes. When ABC premiered the series in 1976, the scripts drew upon the original comic book for inspiration. Wonder Woman’s alter ego was Diana Prince, a World War II spy who worked incognito for Navy intelligence. When the network inexplicably dropped the top-rated show after one season, CBS rushed in to renew and revamp it. *WONDER WOMAN* was bumped-up to present day, endowing Carter in dilemmas that modern audiences could relate to. Whether roving bad guys with her magic lasso or saving Major Steve Trevor,



Nichelle Nichols (far left) wrote the book on *STAR TREK*, titled *Beyond Uhura*. “[Series creator] Gene Roddenberry made me the strong character the [network] didn’t want that much involvement.” In *The “Mirror”* episode.



SCI-FI'S SEXIEST

NICHELLE NICHOLS, #4

SET PHASERS: RACISM, SEXISM & THE NETWORK BRASS.

BY ANNA KAPLAN

Oh, the informality. Has anyone on STAR TREK ever addressed Lieutenant Uhura by her first name? Did she have one? And why didn't 1960's viewers know anything about her home town or native country? "We never really decided at first, because the character kept evolving and nicely so," recalls Nichelle Nichols, who played the original U.S.S. Enterprise's communications officer. "But we laid the important foundation—who she was, her environment, where she came from the United States of Africa, the Bantu tribe, a highly intelligent and progressive tribe. Her parents were professional people, physicians and artists, and their expectations of her were very high, I wanted to know what were the qualifications of this one woman, named Nyota Uhura, to be chosen to go on that first five-year mission. Where no one has gone before."

But "Nyota" was never slipped into the dialogue of the classic STAR TREK series nor in the subsequent motion pictures. "We never gave her a first name until after the show," explains Nichols. "Whoever wrote the history of STAR TREK [Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan] called [series creator] Gene Roddenberry and said, 'I have no first name for Uhura.' Gene told them that we had never made a decision, whether Uhura was her first name or her last name. We always decided that it was probably the last name because 'Uhura' is Swahili [Uhura's native tongue] for 'freedom.' So just as people are called Freeman—'a free-man'—we decided to soften Uhura to Uhuru. We never had a satisfactory first name. The author of STAR TREK's history told Gene that he had a the 'Nyota' name in mind but he wanted Gene's approval.



Nichols & STAR TREK creator Gene Roddenberry. "He wanted to write histories interest studies & Gene achieved that by putting them in a sci-fi format. It was more palatable to the networks... until they realized what he was really doing."

Nichols laughs. "Gene said, 'I can't give you that approval. You'll have to call Nichelle Nichols.' It's typical Gene because, of course, Gene could have given his own approval. He said, 'If she likes it, then tell her I like it, too. But don't tell her I like it first.' So the writer called me and I said, 'Well, Nyota sounds very beautiful, but what does it mean?' And he said, 'In Swahili, it means star.' And I said, 'Absolutely'."

Although Roddenberry preferred Uhura to play a more significant role—first draft scripts embellished her character—the network brass objected to a more functional, more active officer. "Gene really meant to achieve that equality of the people," says Nichols. "But it kept getting killed in the rewrites. The network had the final say, and that's where the changes came. Gene had made me too strong a character, and they didn't want that much involvement. You see, Gene gave to television the first ensemble cast of stars. The networks, the studios and—I think—the industry simply were not ready for more than two stars on a show. They had no frame of reference

for it, and felt it would not be accepted."

So which professional liability prompted a more severe prejudice during that period—being a woman or an Afro-American? "I think that those were almost interchangeable," replies Nichols in a steady voice. "Most assuredly, being African-American because you had to always be on guard. Just to know, in advance, what restaurants or hotels were not going to be discriminating against you. It was a heavy burden. Being female, you share that discrimination with all women. So once you get over the hurdle of being black, then you had to get over the hurdle of being female in this industry and as in any

other walk of life. We only get the vote in this country. When you're thinking that in my lifetime, pre-STAR TREK and during STAR TREK, there were still places that you could not walk in and get a cup of coffee."

She points out that Roddenberry tried to develop societal reformation by "putting it 300 years from today and shrouding it in science fiction." He wanted a cast that reflected America, the Earth, the planet. So he was determined to have an interracial cast of men and women as equals. He touched on political statements, on religious statements, on racial lines, on male-female relationships. I tell you, that man was incredible. As Dr. Martin Luther King said, 'He has changed the face of television forever.' The censors did try and change a lot of the shows but they couldn't destroy it all, and the message came through. If you can present a moral to a story without preaching—which is exactly what this man achieved with STAR TREK—then you have really given something to the world. I'm very proud to have been part of it." □

Carter made it look so darned easy. How she scooted around without popping out of her bustier, I'll never know. Those very same threads, speculate insiders, could collect up to \$25,000 at auction—another testament to the Amazon princess' popularity.

LINDA HAMILTON

Archivists, take note. Linda Hamilton's muscular arms, flexed in *TERMINATOR 2*, should be bronzed and preserved in the Movie Museum of Female Icons. Flashback to the movie's 1984 precursor: a computer system called Skynet fights a losing war against the humans who constructed it. In a last-ditch effort to save itself, Skynet dispatches a cyborg (Arnold Schwarzenegger) back in time to kill Sarah Connor (Hamilton). The forty femme is pregnant with a child who is destined to lead the human resistance to victory. There are lots of stranger-than-fiction stories about the Herculean efforts mothers will endure for their children, e.g., lifting up cars to free their trapped offspring. In *TERMINATOR*, Hamilton's maternal impulse turns

Linda Hamilton won an MTV award, for Best Female Performance, in *T2*. She reprised the role in *T2-3D* (1999).



Lynda Carter, A Miss World USA runner-up (1972), embodied WONDER WOMAN, a TV series based on Charles Moulton's 1940s comic book heroine. She was later cast as another '40s icon in RITA HAYWORTH: LOVE GODDESS (1962).



mythic—she's the Earth Mother, saving not only her child, but the lives of all future generations. She uses her brains and her brawn to save the world, then she does it again in *T2*. Maybe there's something to those pregnancy vitamins after all.

7 ANGELA BASSETT

It's the day before New Year's Eve 2000, and Los Angeles is on the brink of a major riot igniting. This is thanks to the assassination of an influential rap musician, and virtual reality technology that's peddled as the "hip new drug" of choice. In director Kathryn Bigelow's *STRANGE DAYS*, Angela Bassett plays Loretta "Maac" Mason—just another single mother trying to keep a roof over her child's head. In this case, it means she's working as a limo driver trained in weaponry and self-defense—and her mouth is as lethal as her kick. Bassett has the kind of perfectly toned body and wise-beyond-her-years demeanor that is positively mesmerizing on-screen. Co-star Ralph Fiennes, though a sterling actor, doesn't stand a chance against this compelling actress—she steals every scene. Bassett went on to play the U.S. Advisor to President Bill Clinton in last summer's *CONTACT*. When a group of

Cutting her teeth in *MOON ZERO TWO* and *ON HER MAJESTY'S SECRET SERVICE*, Catherine Schell played a busy alien in *SPACE 1999*.



Angela Bassett launched her career with a minor role in *F/X* (1989). The Oscar nominee is currently performing a role in *SUPERMAN*, a sci-fi resurgence.

scientists intercepts a message from an alien race, it's up to Bassett's character, Rachel Constantine, to be the official bridge between the scientists and the White House.

8 CATHERINE SCHELL

She debuted on the *SPACE 1999* in a 1976 episode, "The Guardian of Fire." Schell played the title character's beautiful but deadly servant. By the end of the first season, the TV show's ratings had rapidly declined. Schell

emerged on the series the following year but was cast as Maya, a recurrent member of the Moon Base Alpha crew. Her baroque was an alien scientist who could morph into any living creature at will. With her braided eyebrows and heavenly body, Schell was an instant favorite—the series was revived for another season.

9 MICHELLE PFEIFFER

Her metamorphosis in *BATMAN RETURNS*—from a snowy secretary into a preda-

tory feline—reinvented the phrase, "sex kitten." Pfeiffer plays Catwoman and her alter ego Selina Kyle, who's so afraid of her hairwig boss (Christopher Walken) that her hands shake every time she pours his coffee. When Walken pushes the hapless woman from the window of a skyscraper, Selina transforms herself into Catwoman, an antihero with heart. She even stitches her own cat suit from a black miniskirt, and shows her way to the top of Gotham City's lawless. Favorite line: "I'm a woman and can't be taken for granted. Life's a bitch, now so am I."

Michelle Pfeiffer debuted in deconstructive roles, e.g. "Bombshell" in the short-lived *DELTA HOUSE* series. Catwoman personalized her "rebirth."



10 SIGOURNEY WEAVER

There's a reason why she's one of the highest paid actresses in show business, now riding in \$11 million per film. Whether she's battling bitchy alien queens or swan-diving into a pool of lava, Sigourney Weaver elevates the sci-fi genre to new heights by virtue of her intense acting ability alone. As Warrant Officer Ellen Ripley in the *ALIEN* movie franchise, this 50-year-old woman still looks incredible in her underwear—and the more she sweats, the more we love her. Fans worldwide lamented Ripley's fiery demise in *ALIEN 3*. But last year we were vindicated.

and Ripley rose from the dead as a clone. We never actually plays mommy to an alien-human hybrid in **ALIEN RESURRECTION**. The bad justice has to go "bye-bye" so mum can save planet Earth. A woman's work is never done

11 JULIE NEWMAR

Memo? Categorized as one of **BATMAN**'s television alumni (1966-67), Ms. Newmar—"Catwoman"—has nine lives. A personal fave among viewers, her femme fatale's popularity is sustained among veteran fans and youthful imitators. The sexual tension between Batman and Catwoman was palpable: if she could dissuade him from doing the "good guy" schtick, the feline would surely purr with orgasmic pleasure. In past interviews, Newmar has been quoted as saying, "It was so wonderful being on that show, because you could be nasty and mean—and, in the '60s, women could never be mean, bad and nasty. It was so satisfying. I can't tell you how satisfying it was." Satisfying for us, too—we think you're the cat's meow.

12 DIANA RIGG

Emma Peel, one half of **THE AVENGERS** (1966-68),

Sigourney Weaver collected \$20 for her (8-second) debut in **ANNE HALL**. She earned \$30,000 for **ALIEN** & \$11 million for **ALIEN RESURRECTION**.



T: Julie Newmar's legacy of femme fatales includes Steptin' Jenna (LFL **ABBYC**) and **THE TWILIGHT ZONE**'s Miss Gorda (episode #8, 14). L: As Catwoman: "I'm not just purrfecting around this time, Batman!"

partnered with British Intelligence's John Steed (Patrick Macnee). Each week, the duo saved the world from disasters fueled by tart, subversive slants on sci-fi (killer cyborgs, toxic viruses, et al.). Rigg, cast as Mrs. Peel, is a maverick. She's one of the first outspoken, completely liberated, take-no-prisoners femmes on the tube. The actress initially appeared on **THE AVENGERS** during the 4th season, just in time for the series' transition from black-and-white to color. In the "Death at Bergam Place" episode, she donned her trademark attire, a black leather bodysuit. Uma Thurman was hair to the constructive dial for her turn as Peel in this year's movie spin-off, **THE AVENGERS** (nice trailer, but a critical and commercial flop). Footnote: Rigg was coronated Dame Commander of the British Empire by Queen Elizabeth II (June '94) for her contributions to theater and film.

13 ERIN GRAY

She played Colonel Wilma Deering in the 1979 TV series, **BUCK ROGERS IN**

Fringe benefits from Gray's **BUCK ROGERS** tenure include an action figure (see worth \$50). She was also cast in the **SILVER SPOONS** sitcom.



Dame Rigg: "No man will ever conquer me & make me his slave. I don't years for security. Marriage may be. She has some I find his personality appalling."

THE 20TH CENTURY The show is based on the premise that Buck (Cliff Gervard), a 20th-century astronaut, is accidentally transported 500 years into the future. Told that Earth is recovering from a nuclear war, he allies with Gray's character to fight a renegade breed called **Dragonians**. The cute couple also quarrel with alien traders, interstellar pirates, kidnappers, assassins and other shady figures of ill repute. Gray always looked gorgeous in her shiny, metallic jumpsuits!

14 DINA MEYER

You know her as the gung-ho space warrior and insect exterminator from Paul Verhoeven's **STARSHIP TROOPERS**. As Dizzy Fikes, who's second-in-command, Meyer exhibits more balls-to-the-wall courage than any of her male army buddies. Her pre-battle quip: "With co-star

Meyer's "June" character is an avatar of the sci-fi/fiction heroine that she would be imminently identified with. Keaton Reeves, cast as the title character, is an underground courier. The cure for a deadly neurological disease has been implanted in his brain. Meyer is hired as his butt-kicking bodyguard. Despite the fact that she herself is dying of the technologically transmitted disease, she still manages to go mano-a-mano with the corporate creeps who literally want Reeves' head. Meyer is one of today's most electric sci-fi femmes.

Mulgrave: "I am very vigilant about what Capt. Janeway means to young women, and that responsibility is enormous and deeply gratifying."



15 KATE MULGREW

Another sci-fi actress who's been overlooked in the past, Mulgrew marks a significant departure in the 50-year-old franchise. Her Kathryn Janeway is the first female captain to helm a **STAR TREK** series. Mulgrew ships a much-needed booster shot of estrogen to **STAR TREK VOYAGER**. This is a kinder, gentler Captain—so informal that she asks the bridge crew about their plans for the weekend. She's sort of the den mother to this motley collection of misfits, who are trying to find their way home. Yet, when the situation calls for it, Janeway has to

Captain Van Deen is also one of the funniest scenes in the film. Meyer is the undeniable heart in this gore fest, peopled with stone-faced soldiers and digitized bugs from outer space.

Look at her post work in **JOHNNY MNEMONIC**, and you can clearly see

Meyer: "Luckily, I didn't have to start with low-budget B-films. If I do low-budget, it'll be determined by script."



SCI-FI'S SEXIEST

JULIE NEWMAR, #11

RECALLING THE GENESIS OF HER FELINE FEMME FATALE.

By BOB GARCIA

She was the definitive bad girl—as a feline felon, she'd prefer to drop to her death, and circumvent certain rescue, rather than lose her purlined jewels to the Caped Crusader. Honing the hoofing skills that she practiced on stage (*L'il Abner*), and on-screen (*SEVEN BRIDES FOR SEVEN BROTHERS*), Julie Newmar tempestuously coiled, curled and curved through two seasons of *BATMAN* as Catwoman. Even though Lee Ann Meriwether and Eartha Kitt would later slip into the trademark kotards, Newmar remains indelibly hooked to the caty Queen of Camp.

"I'd never even heard of the show," said Newmar, who approved the role only because her brother, then enrolled in college, insisted that *BATMAN* was Harvard's #1 rated series. Making her debut on the series, Newmar received the script—during costume fittings—the day before cameras rolled at Culver City. "I used to make my own costumes, and know how to create that extraordinary curvy look—it's all secrets that you learn to do," recalled the actress. "I changed the belt line. I put this flashy gold belt around my hips, instead of my waist, because I thought it accentuated the curviness."

"We never had time for the makeup, to do anything wonderful or extraordinary. If they spent some money on it, we could have come up with something really incredible."

Bruce Hutchinson, the series' makeup supervisor, remembered, "Julie had a concept of what this character was



supposed to look like. So I said, 'I want to see what you do and, if it works, it's all yours.' She did these eyebrow things which were all her creation. And she drew in eyelashes all around her eyes with a very sharp pencil. She created a wonderful look...a very soft yet vulnerable look that played into the evilness of that character. Julie's a very strange lady. She's ethereal."

Newmar was among the celebrities who troubled *BATMAN* villainy into

a Hollywood trend. "It was a great role," she enthused. "Catwoman was so spontaneous and creative and maddening and sexy and innocent." She credits Stanley Ralph Ross, who wrote every Catwoman script exempting one episode, for the character's success. "He added a love interest to it," she smiled.

A student of Lee Strasberg's Method acting, Newmar bought a couple of cats "to get a feel" for her role. She recounted the filming as "always rushed." After the character's movements



1. An 18-year-old Newmar cut her teeth with decorative roles, e.g. "The Golden Girl" in *SILVERDUST OF THE HILLS*. 7. "Catwomen are just so sexy and spontaneous and maddening!"

were blocked for the camera, the directors would say they were going to shoot the rehearsal. That means, "Hurry up, we're saving money. Do it right."

"You had to be like Robin Williams, completely spontaneous! It's fun that way. I kind of liked it. It demanded a pin-perfect performance right off the bat. When the villains came on, they tilted the camera...as they did with the dialogue. It was always fun to invent—

at an angle, so to speak—so that what you did had surprise elements to it all the time.

"You're not going to fly off your mark, because the camera is not ready to catch you. You [did] try to have something up your sleeve that would surprise them and your co-star; but something that stays in the script, in the moment, in the frame.

"On top of what you see, it's



Newmar served-up sexy Catwoman but deflected any previous of subtextuality. She played a subversive robot in a 1964 series, MY LIVING DOLL, but the public didn't buy it. Catwoman is her legacy.



"I used to laugh when I got on the set. They used to have weird looking string balls hanging there, and these ugly chairs with cat skin. It looked much more marvelous on the screen. Those colors just gave it that ring. All the crafts got to come up with the most outrageous stuff. What fun?

"I love props because you can fall over them, you can do funny things with them and you can accentuate certain important words with them. I used to adore working with them. And anything that didn't work was even more wonderful: you could do a reaction off of it. And if that was funny, you'd react off that reaction. You'd have three or four laughs right there."

As a result of other commitments, Newmar had to decline the 1966 movie spin-off, also titled BATMAN (one critic cautioned, "Catwoman fans should note that she's played here by Lee Meriwether, not Julie Newmar—rue?"). "I think the whole concept of the show—when it was really good—really fit a fair-sized TV screen, rather than the big screen," observed Newmar. "It made it funnier [to be seen] there. That is reversed when you have a great and beautiful film with fabulous scenery. You don't want to see it all crunched down onto a small 24 or 36-inch screen. You want to be surrounded, so your eyeballs just pick up the edges."

Newmar also had to forfeit the Catwoman role during the TV series' final season, she opted to play the "bad girl" in J. Lee Thompson's extravagant Western, MACKENNA'S GOLD. Nevertheless, aficionados accept no substitutes: Newmar is their single personification of Catwoman. "Actually, I get far more fan mail now than I ever did when the

comedy—and comedy elicits the unused intelligence in the back of my brain. Which I fancy a lot. Straight drama is fairly simple, you know—Solomon!—but with comedy, now we're creating something magical. To have fun with something is a very special focus, a very special energy.

"The actors [cast in BATMAN] were outrageous because if they didn't play it straight, they gave it away. You could go very far indeed, but underneath it all, you had to truly play it

straight. The time when a person is at his most foolish is when he believes his own ego. He stands up and pounds desks, and you just laugh and think, 'What a damn fool!' That's how it has to be."

Compromising the budget, surreal and sometimes lucky backdrops approximated a simulation of a comic book environment. "They got everything they could get from the back halls, or wherever they store that dusty old scenery," Newmar recalled

show came out," said the actress. "People would notice and speak up about it then, but not through the mail." Celebrity, however, does have its drawbacks. "People will come up to me, stick an elbow in my side and say, 'Purr. Now squat down and take a picture with my niece here. We want to take this back to Colorado.' Or, 'Will you please lie down so we can get to see how tall you are?' Sure, I'm in the middle of this roast beef, I'll just do that right away." □

problem dispensing with the nooties and showing her teeth. She keeps her cool under every fire, and always manages to outfox unfriendly aliens that the USS *Voyager* might encounter in the Delta quadrant of the galaxy. Looking fit and trim at 43 years, Mulgrew is punching major holes in the myth that there are no substantive roles for women who exceed Hollywood's "golden age" (over 30).



ST VOYAGER's Roxann Dawson debuted as a series regular on the controversial *NIGHTINGALES* ('90). Her genre credits include *DAKOTA* 3.

16 ROXANN DAWSON

Another daughter of *STAR TREK*, *VOYAGER*, Dawson plays half-Klingon, half-human B'Elanna T'Pol, an infallibly understated wit. Her fiery Chief Engineer is perpetually spitting for a stinging reprieve, and one can almost feel the beleaguered T'Polanna trying to restrain her temper. Whether she's recalibrating configurations on the warp core, or bating heads with her fellow space travelers, Dawson does it with simmering intensity. Plus, she's apparently the only one on the starship who's getting any levin' these days. Her prime-time romance with *Voyager* pilot Lt. Tom Paris (Robert Duncan McNeill) has been a featured subplot in many an episode of late. This gal could watch water boil and I'd still be riveted to the screen.



Milla Jovovich was out of her "element" in *RETURN TO BLUE LAGOON* (with Eric Roberts). "I don't care what genre my next film is," says the former model.

Jeri Ryan: "I lose Seven having the chance to get in Jeremy's face. No one else on the ship can do that!"



17 JERI RYAN

Not to belabor the point, but, these days, *STAR TREK VOYAGER* is monopolizing TV's sci-fi market in regard to casting sexy but credible actresses. Fourth season ratings shot up proportionately with viewers' pulse rates when curvaceous Jeri Ryan was recruited as a member of the *Voyager* crew. Her character, Seven of Nine, belongs to a warlike bio-cyber race called The Borg. Absent the USS *Voyager*, the silver-suited fixate is in an unrescuable

position, she has to try to make nice with a multitude of races that have been "assimilated" (read: wiped out) by her own people. Her unfamiliarity with human customs puts her at constant odds with everyone. Seven is the perfect foil to Roxann Dawson's B'Elanna T'Pol, and the two bullheaded personalities clash in almost every episode. There's also an intriguing romance brewing between Ryan's character and eager, young Harry Kim (Garrett Wang). Poor Harry's been pining over Miss Nine for months. Will he ever get the girl?

18 MILLA JOVOVICH

It ain't easy being the embodiment of pure love. In director Luc Besson's *THE FIFTH ELEMENT*, Milla Jovovich plays Leeloo—an alien who pilers the powers of love to circumvent the arrival of Evil on Earth, circa 2250. Jovovich spends most of the movie wearing a few strategically applied bandages on her body, kindling a fetishistic vision (think bandage/Roman breast-binding). While trying to shade an opportunist (Gary Oldman), Leeloo flips and spins and leaps with the grace of a circus acrobat. It's been reported that the wife's colloquial language was invented by Besson and further refined by Jovovich. Upon concluding production, the couple commemorated by dropping the phony syntax into full-blown conversations.



Bullock wields **PRACTICAL MAGIC**: "If a movie turns bad, your ego gets whooped. They look at no one else."

19 SANDRA BULLOCK

Bullocks to you! Though it seems to be unfashionable to admit this, I nevertheless find

SCIFI'S SEXIEST

KATE MULGREW, #15

TRAGIC LOVE & REFLECTIONS ON HER "VOYAGER" VENUE.

BY DALE KUTZERA

STAR TREK'S executive producing brain trust—Rick Berman, Michael Piller, and Jeri Taylor—had always wanted to develop a stellar female role: A captain. Their ST: VOYAGER spin-off, in preparation, was afforded such a vacancy. The only problem was finding the right woman for the job. They had a wish list of major stars but realized each of the prospects was out of their grip. In the meantime, hundreds of lesser-known actresses, auditioning for the plum role, were taped while reciting dialogue from "The Corbairer" pilot.

"We wanted the character to be a more accessible captain," said writer/producer Brannon Braga, "—a captain who wasn't afraid to show emotions, a captain who was actively trying to be warmer, more outwardly compassionate and more in tune with her crew."

Merritt Blake, an agent, pitched Genevieve Bujold as the series' central character, Captain Kathryn Janeway. The producers were elated: the Oscar nominee's track record (OBSESSION, MURDER BY DECREE, DEAD RINGERS, etc.) qualified her as A-list. But, within one week, Bujold dropped out.

"You never know what fate is going to do," said Jeri Taylor ("Kate Mulgrew" had read in New York and was put on tape and, by her own admission, did not read particularly well that day. Knowing she hadn't bit her stride, when Kate got back



Mulgrew: "I was born to play Captain Janeway. She's always [standing] in front of the view screen, and I'm always the one who does that. She is very strong."

out to Los Angeles she asked to read for us in person. She did that about the same time Genevieve was dancing in front of us. So we read Kate and she really was good, but our eyes were dazzled by star power."

When Bujold resigned, the trio of producers were stuck with an \$8 million project in progress—without a star. Four semi-finalists, including Mulgrew, were assembled for reconsideration. "By that time the die was cast," Taylor continued, "because if we were going to go with a male captain, we would have gone with a female first officer. It had to be a woman captain, at least in our minds, so we went in with these four women and Kate was simply wonderful. There was so much passion and integrity coming from her, Kate spun lines, which sounded corny coming from other people, into gold. We breathed a sigh of relief and

said, 'You've got the job.' That same day, she was in hair and makeup for a TV Guide spread."

Mulgrew, whose previous featured role in a series was a single season as KATE COLUMBO (1979), had not been a Trek aficionado, despite her close friendship with John DeLancie. "John forced me on pain of death to watch his [STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION] episodes and I thought that the level of writing, the performances—the whole package—was excellent. And the standards for VOYAGER have been as very high from every level. I am very vigilant about what Janeway means, especially to young women, and that responsibility is enormous and deeply gratifying."

Hillary Clinton told me herself that [the First Lady's] job is so profoundly important: if she can do even one day of it well, she may

have altered the history of our tenure. That is probably true of Janeway. We were at the White House, honoring eminent female scientists from around the world. A young girl, 17, came up to me and said, 'I'm going to M.I.T. because of you, Ms. Mulgrew, and, one day, I will be a chief engineer at NASA.' And I thought, 'Katy, you've got a lot of work to do.'

"Janeway is very strong. She never sits down. She's a mover. I'm not going to sit in a chair as an actress, and Janeway doesn't sit in her chair as a commander or a scientist. The directors try to put me in the chair and I say, 'No chair for me.' It's a marriage between writing staff and actress and it's been, so far, a real bliss because we are evolving. They know more about STAR TREK than I do, but I know more about Janeway."

Mulgrew would prefer that Janeway, unlike Captain Kirk on the original series and Riker on TNG, refrain from galactic affairs. "We talked to the executive producers at length about this, it's a delicate issue. The men—and this smacks a bit of a double standard—could get away with a little more of that. Janeway may be a commander, but she is a lady nonetheless, and my understanding is that [a love affair] won't happen until she has very carefully resolved her connections on Earth—until enough time has transpired so a relationship could evolve, one of integrity and depth. It will be

continued on page 50



Natasha Henstridge: "No nudity in *SPECIES* would have been ridiculous. Working to promote, I'd done realize that showing her body is suggestive of sex."

Sandra Bullock's girl-next-door hardness is by quite appealing. She's like a carnival girl scout who abidingly volunteers to haul your butt out of deep woods. As a lovable cyber geek whose identity has been deleted in *THE NET*, she unravels a tangled web of murder and sabotage to reclaim her life. And speaks flow between Bullock, as a 21st-century cop, and Sylvester Stallone in *DEMOLITION MAN*. The duo's futuristic, contact-free sex scene was a hoet.

20 NATASHA HENSTRIDGE

She's the ultimate black widow. Cast as shapely 8id, a predatory extraterrestrial, Henstridge is on the prowl for a human male to sate the procreation of her race. There's just one teeny problem: the human dudes die as soon as they're finished

the dirty deed. Seems 8id is carrying a virus that's poisonous to her paramours. No matter. Henstridge isn't exactly suffering from a shortage of courageous young men who are willing to lay down their lives in service to her needs. Mating season returned in '98, but *SPECIES II* turned on neither critics nor audiences.

21 JODIE FOSTER

Is it just me? Or does anyone else think that Jodie Foster looks more radiant and gorgeous in *CONTACT* than in her previous films? I mean, she's downright breathtaking. Based on a book by Carl Sagan, *CONTACT* has been described as "a *CLOSE ENCOUNTERS* for the 90s." Through Foster's character, radio astronomer Dr. Eleanor Arroway, we evaluate what mankind's initial brush with a martian existence might

really be like. The prelude is bitter: weeks of major media hype lead up to an event that most people will discount as a no-show. Arroway battles not aliens, but budget cuts and her own professional peers. Emotional tension takes precedence over pyrotechnics. Foster, who earned a Saturn Award for her performance, had already picked-up a couple of Oscars. Only 36 years old, she's already proven herself to be one of the best actresses of our time.

22 CLAUDIA CHRISTIAN

In a recent episode of *BABYLON 5*, two maintenance workers speculated on why Commander Susan Ivanova decided to vacate her position on the space station. One answer: she wanted more money. I winced at this not-so-subtle jab at actress Claudia Christian's departure from the show. The buzz surrounding Christian's egress has been ascribed to a "he said, she said" p.a.v. Christian says she was fired, and Warner Bros. says she quit. Something to do about a misunderstanding over contract extensions, yadda yadda. What's a *Babylon* bisexual telepathic Jew to do? Daviddanya, *BABYLON 5*. Hello, feature films. Next up, *THE GUARDIAN*.

Christian's tenure on *BABYLON 5* was *HEXED*: "I was dismissed early and simply I did not leave the show—and I did not ask for more money."



23 LINDSAY WAGNER

In 1975, Lindsay Wagner made a guest appearance on a two-part episode of *THE SIX MILLION DOLLAR MAN*, the TV series about astronaut Col. Steve Austin who had "swelled to arms"—his own—after crashing in an experimental aircraft (artificial, "superhuman") limbs replaced



Jodie Foster as *WELL*, a hermit who teaches science in nature. She copes the film to *CONTACT* ("Sense alone").

his "bearded" appendages). Wagner played Jamie Sommers, Austin's high school sweetheart. Their reunion was pretty uneventful until they engaged in a skydiving competition. Oooh! Jamie's parachute failed, and she plummeted to earth. Her damaged legs, right arm, and right eye were replaced with cybernetic prostheses, and thus the Bionic Woman was born. Unfortunately, Jamie died while she and Austin were planning their wedding—seems her body rejected its inorganic implants. No worries—Jamie was

her performance on *THE BIONIC WOMAN* earned Wagner an Emmy for Best Actress. She was considered for the Janevay role in *ST. VOYAGER*.



cryptically frozen, repaired, revived, and spun off into her own TV series, **THE BIONIC WOMAN**. It debuted on ABC in 1976 and featured the adventures of Jerrie Rousseau, secret agent for the Office of Scientific Intelligence (OSI). The series survived three seasons, the last one on NBC. Thinker before Kate Mulgrew was cast, Wagner's name was often mentioned as a possible Captain Kathryn Janeway on **STAR TREK: VOYAGER**.



The eccentric **Forbes** restrains himself from cracking "bush" jokes about ST:TW's Patrick Stewart. Her '90 genre credits include **ESCAPE FROM L.A.**

24 MICHELLE FORBES

My favorite Bajoran, Lt. Ro Laren on **STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION** (1991-1994), always had a problem with authority. Michelle Forbes' headstrong alien crew member was constantly making waves. First, she disobeyed a direct order while serving on the USS *Wellington*—the consequence was the wipe-out of an eight-man team. Sentenced to prison, she was released on the condition that she obey the resistance of Bajoran terrorist attacks against the Federation. And that's just the back story. The real fun began once Lt. Ro joined the USS *Enterprise*. If she wasn't breaking Starfleet dress code regulations, or exchanging harsh words with Commander Riker (Jonathan



BARR WIRE was a boobifice hurt, but Pam Anderson is relieved her shoot-in-up scene "was not eager and spine like C.J. I wanted a part about kicking ass."

Frakes), Laren conspired to sabotage the Cardassian heavies who had ravaged her home planet and murdered her family. Eventually the lieutenant turned vigilante, stealing a shuttle craft and going AWOL, she joined a band of guerrilla rebels called the Maquis. Lt. Ro's whereabouts are unknown. Paramount is reportedly willing to reintroduce the character into the franchise, pending upon

Forbes' availability

25 RACHEL TICO TIN

Cast as a rebellious Melina, Ms. Tico tin was compatibly matched with Schwarzenegger in **TOTAL RECALL**, a sci-fi shoot-'em-up. Unlike Sharon Stone's wife-for-hire, Tico tin's libertine is navigated by a moral compass. And tough? Though her acts is

More mayhem: Rachel Tico tin killed with Schwarzenegger in **TOTAL RECALL**. The actress made her memorable debut in **FORT APACHE, THE BRONX** (1987).



drilled to bits, she barely breaks a sweat. Utilizing the martial arts, automatic weapons and her wit, Melina saves Martian colonies (not to mention Schwarzenegger's life—and more than a few times, too).

26 PAMELA ANDERSON

Call her dangerous, call her a smooth operator. But, whatever you do, don't call her babe. As the title character in **BARR WIRE**, Pamela Lee was surprisingly watchable—much more so than her home video with bubbly Tommy Lee. When given some decent dialogue, a killer set of wheels, and the right wardrobe, Lee can be pretty charismatic. Of course, her incredible body (some assembly required) is total eye candy, and the real reason the world is so fascinated with her.



In **VIDEOGORE**, Debbie Harry plays a femme who revels in her fetishistic (and really sinister) powers of the film's creative editing for televisions.

27 DEBBIE HARRY

Blonde's platinum-haired lead singer played a kinky radio personality, with a penchant for masochistic indulgence, in **VIDEOGORE**. David Cronenberg's visceral, sex-fi abstraction Harry is sucked into a nightmare world of cathode ray technology, a milieu where video can control and

alter your perceptions of reality. Through the video medium, her character speaks to cable programmer James Woods from beyond the grave. She eventually seduces him into taking his own life—which may prompt his virtual rebirth. “Long live the flesh!”



She survived **POLICE ACADEMY 4** & a **‘sounding track’** record (she \$80 million SPINOFF landed in the U.S.). But the pa-driven Stone needs a hit.

28 SHARON STONE

While her performance in **TOTAL RECALL** didn't bowl us over, I enjoyed Sharon Stone's hustiness in the critically drubbed **SPHERE**. She plays Beth Halperin, a suicidal marine biologist, who investigates a enigmatic space ship—from the future—after she submerged 33,000 humans under the sea. The blonde bombshell is very convincing as women on the verge of a nervous breakdown, and she looks terrific in her short, bitchy '80s

29 MELINDA CLARKE

She makes evil look fun! As agent Jessica Priest, Clarke is sworn to destroy superheos **SPAWN**. Rallying to her anne local boss (Martin Sheen), Clarke is intent on extracting a virus that will trigger Armageddon: not only would Earth be turned into a parking lot, but Heaven would be abolished by the Devil, sim-



Prior to **BABYLON 5**, Scoggins' apprenticeship included scenes, a research role on **LOS & CLARK**, and **8-1/2**. "Too many women sit back, hoping something good will happen. And that's bullshit. You have to make it happen for yourself."

self. Did I mention? Clarke's leather gear really rocks.

30 TRACY SCOGGINS

When Claudia Christian's Commander's post was vacated, Tracy Scoggins leapt aboard TNT's **BABYLON 5**. Debuting this season as Captain Elizabeth Lochley, Scoggins projects a cool, almost subversive, quality onto the role. She's

Clarke's roles include **SPAWN** and **RETURN OF THE LIVING DEAD 3**. "I played a member in the latter—better than the 'screaming teenage girl'!"



beautiful and smart, yes, but she's also secretive. In the Earth-Minor War, around which the premise of the show revolves, Lochley fought against her home planet. So why is a traitor offending the Earth Alliance's most preferential space station? Because she's supposed to symbolize peace between the two worlds. She also happens to be the ex-wife of the President. But that's just another one of Lochley's dark, little secrets. And it's the subtleties of Scoggins' acting—as she tries to keep a lid on her character's past—that keeps me tuning in each week.

31 CATHERINE MARY STEWART

So what would happen if a Valley girl woke up one morning to discover that civilization had been wiped out—overnight—by a passing comet? This is the central story of a sci-fi comedy, **NIGHT OF THE COMET**.

Catherine Mary Stewart plays Regina, a Valley chick and reigning queen of the video arcade until all of her competition is vaporized into dust. Reg's self-defense training comes in handy when she finds herself battling mutant zombies and mad scientists. A pulpy pleasure.

Stewart was cast in two sci-fi films, both produced in '86: **LAST STAR-FIGHTER** & **NIGHT OF THE COMET**.



32 NANA VISITOR

Before she joined **Star Trek: Deep Space Nine** character—Major Kara Nerys—was one of the terrorist Maquis. Now she's second-in-command on Deep Space Nine, a Cardassian space station that's been appropriated by the Federation. This shrewd Raganan thinks fast on her feet and she always looks beautiful. Last year, Visitor married co-star Alexander Siddig, who plays Dr. Julian

Visitor & Avery Brooks' **DEEP SPACE 9**. She also starred in **Death Wish** & **WORKING GIRL**, a 1989 TV series.



Does Kelly LeBrock mind cosplaying in **WEIRD SCIENCE & WOMAN IN RED** as a fantasy babe? "You are as typecast as you make yourself. If you don't want to be typecast, you can do low-budget films, get on-typecast, and cover work again."



Jane Fonda in **BARBARELLA**. But she was not the studio's first choice. The brass preferred Verna Loe, but the *Babe* snagged the role by terminating her United Artists contract



Bashir: When the couple got pregnant, Visakor's character became a surrogate mother to the child of shipmates Miles and Keiko O'Brien.

33 KELLY LEBROCK

Merging *Playboy* fantasy with *Frankenstein*, geeky Anthony Michael Hall and his huddy Ian Mitchell-Smith ply computer technology to build the "perfect woman" in 1985's **WEIRD SCIENCE**. Kelly LeBrock plays Lisa, the teen's carry creation, who's rendered into an overdone Barbie doll but equipped with Einstein's intellect and a British accent. She proceeds to "cure" the boys of their virginity, and turn the two socially inept inventors into certified party animals.

34 JANE FONDA

Those clothes! That chic punk spaceship with the white shag rug! That sexual appetite! That pacifist nature! Jane Fonda, as **BARBARELLA**,

embodies everything I love about the '60s. Of course, I'm too young to even remember that decade but never mind—Jane has the power to almost make me wish I was ten years older.

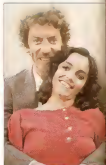
35 SUE PRICE

Here's one of the best actresses you've never seen. In **NEMESIS 2: NEBULA**, professional body builder Sue Price stars as the last ray of hope for mankind. That cool,

Directed by Albert Pyun in **NEMESIS 2: NEBULA**, Parts 2-4, Sue Price—a professional bodybuilder—played strong females.



low-budget sci-fi sequel is driven by some cagacious role reversal: In the 21st century, human beings are enslaved by cyborgs. The fate of mankind relies on a brawny woman named Alex (Price), who's been genetically engineered to defeat the technological tyrants. Price is the female equivalent of Rambo in this film, replete with an astounding physique and brilliant blue eyes. Though **NEMESIS 2** was her first film, Price's naturally understated acting ability is clearly apparent. She later returned to the screen in a couple of sequels, **NEMESIS 3** and 4.



Brooke Adams & Donald Sutherland in the '78 remake of **INVASION OF THE BODY SNATCHERS**; the same year, she made **DAYS OF HEATHEN** ("A masterpiece," raved a U.K. critic)

36 BROOKE ADAMS

Unlike her predecessor—Dana Wynter, the heroine of 1966's **INVASION OF THE BODY SNATCHERS**—Brooke Adams is the first to intix an alien conspiracy in the 1978 remake. Wynter, with her Cold War era mentality and matching torpeds bra, was too dense to figure out the alien invasion for herself. Adams represents *The New And Improved Woman*—cerebral cortex included. Prior to breaching sci-fi, the ethereal but intense Adams shot **SHOCK WAVES**, an effective, low-budget horror sleeper with Peter Cushing.

SCI-FI'S SEXIEST

JODIE FOSTER, #21

LAST YEAR, FOSTER MADE CONTACT WITH SCI-FI AND FEMINISM.

BY DOUGLAS EBY

One of the most appealing prospects about last year's *CONTACT*, notes its star/co-producer Jodie Foster, was the intensity of her character, Dr. Rila Arroway, a radio astronomer and pioneer—she discovers a signal in deep space that instructs her to construct a machine. The doctor's personal odyssey includes an emotionally impacting conversation with her late father, who's not a ghost but an alien-generated facsimile. Carl Sagan's novel, which was adapted into the movie, describes the experience as therapeutic: "Whatever happened next, a wound deep within her was being healed."

"For me," says Foster, "that [scene] was the one reason why I was really drawn to this movie, over and over again, as the years have gone on. That's the one scene that, for me, is the pivotal moment in the film. And I knew that that was my obsession. *NELL* basically is the exact same damn story," she laughs, referring to her 1994 release. Cast in the title role, Foster played a hermit—"the product of a stroke-ridden mother"—who finds spiritual solace in nature. "There must be a reason why I'm obsessed by that," the actress continues. "It's so interesting. When you think of both films, they're completely opposite: *CONTACT* has nothing to do with *NELL* and yet, for me, it's the same drive. It's this idea that, at a young age, you're abandoned by somebody and the pain was so dilapidated, and so unjust, that you made a decision that it didn't happen. So you continue your life, sort of recreating the world in this magical fantasy of saying, 'Well, if I could just try harder or listen harder, I'd find him' and 'It was my fault, I did something and then he



"I have my own brand of sci-fi," says Foster, "and that's the human connection—not so much the opticals, what with little green men and things blowing up."

went away.' I think the greatest moment of healing is when you look off into that pond, and you accept the fact that he's gone—and that you've changed, and you're no longer the person you were and that you're alone. And both of those stories, *NELL* and *CONTACT*, follow that same path."

There seems to be a pattern. Twenty-two years ago, as *THE LITTLE GIRL WHO LIVES DOWN THE LANE*, Foster portrayed a gifted orphan, the likely heir to a fortune if she can persuade neighbors that her father—who has abruptly passed away—is still alive. "It was kind of marketed as a horror movie, but it wasn't," recalls Foster. "You know, I'd forgotten about that movie. The interesting thing is that it kind of fits in [with *NELL* and *CONTACT*]. The girl's father has died, and the whole town be-

lieves he's still alive, and she continues to live in this house as if he was still alive—and anybody who finds out the real story suddenly starts dying."

Foster admits she's never been an aficionado of science fiction or fantasy films—"unless there was a real human connection, and then I completely go with it. *ALTERED STATES* is a movie that I absolutely love—or *THE ANDROMEDA STRAIN*. I love films that were almost medical thrillers. But again, it's because they're all about humanity and not so much about little green men. I have my own particular head of sci-fi, and that's really the human connection—not so much the opticals and effects, what with things blowing up."

Foster recounts spending hours in Seattle with Carl Sagan, and his wife

Ann Druyan, during the late writer's final days. She describes their discussion of *CONTACT*, and the issues the film addressed, as "my pleasure. And I hoped that [Druyan] knew that I make movies to try and get better, not worse, and part of wanting to make this film was to really honor and protect Carl's original vision. It would be very tempting to take a movie like this and make it about NASA and space things."

Foster wasn't aware of the Sagan novel until three years ago, when director George Miller (*THE ROAD WARRIOR*)—who was originally attached to the project—"gave [the novel] to me. I read it just after I read the screenplay. Our movie is very different from the book, but I really enjoyed the novel because of all of Carl's touches—it brings every different type of science in, too, whether it's biology or genetics

or whatever. But if you were really to adapt it faithfully, in terms of all the different characters, it would be impossible—a 20-hour movie."

Directed by Robert Zemeckis, Foster comfortably related to her introverted character: "Absolutely. And mostly for her sort of singular, obsessive passion. That's something that I really wanted to keep and that,



The outspoken Foster (3) played the equally cold Dr. Arroway ("She won't disguise the truth") who makes CONTACT with aliens (5).



I know, is a big part of my life. I tend to be incredibly singular about what I'm fascinated by, and I can't seem to see anything else. And here has much more longevity than mine does, usually nine lasts about four months.

"It's especially interesting that my character is a scientist because it's not supposed to be about belief, it's supposed to be cold, hard fact. But the greatest scientific discoveries were all made by young people who were able to say, 'You know, damn it, two plus two equals five because why not?' They are at that time in their lives where they want to risk, and they want to believe in something blindly, stupidly. And they don't really know the risks that they're engendering. I think when you're 40, you stop making big discoveries because you start getting safe."

But there's something about Dr. Arroway that's too nebulous for even Foster to define. "I can't even explain this. I've tried many times but it always falls flat like a rock—but she has an idea that there's something more pure to hold out for. Like if you knew you had to be absolutely alone in order to

take this enormous journey to find the most pure love there is, would you say, 'Forget it, I don't want to find a pure love, I'd rather spend my life with somebody?' Or would you say, 'No, I'm going to hold out for the big stuff?' And I think she's held out for the big stuff. I think there's a side of her that says, 'There's something out there that's larger than this, and I'm not going to waste my time setting for less.'

"Traditionally, women who excel have had to place themselves carefully, because the journey is so fraught with disrespect, not being allowed in, all the lack of acceptance, and old traditional wounds. But it doesn't have to be that way. Another movie like that is *LITTLE MAN TATE*, [Foster—who directed this 1991 release—was cast as the single mother of an intellectually gifted son]. In that film, there are two women—one represents the head, one represents the heart. And, unfortunately in our culture, women have had to choose between the two, they weren't allowed to be both as a whole."

Turning back to CONTACT, Foster notes that Dr. Arroway's obsessive determination to become an astronaut—and establish communication with extraterrestrials—is governed by ideology not politics. "She's blunt and annoying," explains the actress. "She doesn't know when to say the right thing because she won't disguise the truth. And she's not interested in telling somebody something they want to hear. The fact that she's almost aggressively against the system means she's not an easy person to help. In terms of Dr. Arroway [Elle's former mentor] being the guy who's kind of accepted politics, I'd choose him as an astronaut in a second. He knows how to talk to the press, he's easier to have dinner with.

He may be the best candidate for America, but he's not necessarily the best candidate for the universe because he's not as open and truthful."

In regard to her personal politics, Foster notes, "I pride myself on knowing as much about feminism as the next person, and not being scared to say, 'I'm a feminist. But, at the same time, its role in our society has changed dramatically because our traditions are changing. So sometimes the theories fit, and sometimes they just don't, because people are evolving.'"

How would Foster summarize the \$90 million production, which earned her a Golden Globe nomination as Best Actress? "I think the fact that CONTACT is so technical, and there's so much suspension of disbelief in terms of acting to hide screen, you have to be truthful in completely different ways. You have to find a place to be non-distractedly focused, even though you're hanging from wires when you're supposed to be in the center of the galaxy. And that, I think, was a big challenge. I'd never done that." □



Thurman: "Poison Ivy's cavalier love of wickedness, her insatiable desire to cause trouble, did appeal to me."

37 UMA THURMAN

Batman Dr. Pamela Isley gets a nasty case of Poison Ivy when she collides into a shelf full of toxins. Playing it wily over the top in BATMAN & ROBIN, Thurman's PC villainess is determined to save the plant world from mankind. She kills her victims with venom kisses—a temptation that Boy Wonder-turned-fighter had to resist. Non—can't live with them, can't turn them into muck. Nobody said it was easy being green.

38 PAULA PATTON

When I interviewed Mr. Prentiss, only last year, she told

Graduating from ingenue to versatile actress, Prentiss added dark humor to the potential STEPHEN WIVES.



me that, while shooting *THE STEPPORD WIVES*, she didn't have a clue it would be gauged as the most poignant feminist fable of the '70s. Prentiss plays Bobba, a bored housewife who—along with Katherine Ross' spouse—discovers that the men in the Connecticut town of Steppord are systematically replacing their wives with anatomically "perfected" robots, who love to cook and clean. Prentiss' key scene is a scary abduction of her human psyche.



Fawcett, since 1970. The ex-ANGEL's career was imperiled with a string of duds. *BURNING BED* (84) saved her.

39 FARRAH FAWCETT

Though she appeared in *LOGAN'S RUN* (1976), Fawcett's role as a cosmetic surgeon's assistant was, well, mostly cosmetic. She was also cast in *SATURN 3* (1980) as a hydroponic scientist whose idyllic life in remote asteroid fields is disrupted by a killer robot. The ex-CHARLEY'S ANGEL was disorientative in the genre, but her kuster could hardly deflect critical barbs and sapping boxoffice. She finally validated her dramatic aptitude in a TV movie, *THE BURNING BED* (84).

40 GEENA DAVIS

As a journalist who chronicles the birth of teleportation, Geena Davis delivers a flawless performance in *THE FLY* 6.6, the 1986 remake. Her future ex-husband, Jeff Goldblum, stars as an inventor destroyed by his own creation: a computer malfunction turns Goldblum into a humanly hybrid and

poor Davis is left pregg with his larva. Ick.



Helin debuting in *METROPOLIS*. She was the #1 choice as *THE BLUE ANGEL*, but Marlene Dietrich was cast.

41 BRIGITTE HELM

METROPOLIS, Fritz Lang's dark vision of the future, was released in 1926—crackle dab between the first and second World Wars. The genre's premier femme, Brigitte Helm, played dual roles as Maria, the peace-loving earth mother, and The Robot who inherits the latter's skin-tight metal casing, which aroused the female form, later evolved into the leather and Spandex body suits that are standard sci-fi heroine attire today.

42 JENNY AGUTTER

As "The Girl" in Nicolas Roeg's *WALKABOUT* (1971), 18-year-old Jenny Agutter was labeled a provocateur, what with nude scenes that manifested her acclimation to nature. She was also afforded familiarity in the mainstream media via her roles in horror/sci-fi films, e.g. *AN AMERICAN WEREWOLF IN LONDON*. As Jessica in *LOGAN'S RUN*, she allies with Logan (Michael York) in their exodus from a doomed city, it's the 23rd century and

Davis tipped off FF that she "write a treatment called *Fly*. It's a sequel to *THE FLY* Fox has had it for years."



Noted a reviewer of *LOGAN'S RUN*, "Miss Jenny Agutter is a wonderfully wolfish Jessica, only occasionally winking about being fired or scared."

the couple's odyssey includes a voyage to the metaphorical "Sanctuary" of freedom. Agutter, as usual, convincingly plays a contrariety of characteristics, i.e. 1980s/earched. When she and Logan agree to live as "beloved husband and wife," and raise children in the deserted wilds of what was once Washington, D.C., Agutter symbolizes the second coming of Eve and

humanity's rebirth. The role was repeated, one year later, by Heather Menzies (1983) in the short-lived TV spin-off.



Amyl Entry (Turner) to Mad Max, "Save the world from. One day, out of the mob. Next, a leather choker."

43 TINA TURNER

She's a power-hungry law-maker squeezed into post-apocalyptic dystopian duds; music diva Tina Turner steals MAD MAX BEYOND THE THUNDERDOME. The creator's Amyl Entry tries to use Mel Gibson to tighten her grip on Bartertown, a city that's powered by methane fumes sifted from pag feces. It's a dirty job, but she's just the woman to do it.

44 NATASHA RICHARDSON

Spinning *THE HANDMAID'S TALE*, Ma Richardson plays the plain role of Kate. Following a coup, futuristic America is at civil war, ruled by a repressive Bible-busting regime. Due to environmental poisons, only one

Richardson, daughter of screen Vanessa Redgrave, with Robert DeNiro in *THE HANDMAID'S TALE*.



SCI-FI'S SEXIEST

PAULA PRENTISS, #38

REFLECTIONS OF "THE STEPFORD WIVES."

BY LAURA SCHIFF

From the outside, Paula Prentiss' Tudor-style home in Beverly Hills has a semblance of perfect order. The windows shine, the lawn is immaculate, even the doorknob is devoid of visible fingerprints. That's the outside. The inside, however, looks lived in. Not messy, not dirty, but jam-packed with bric-a-brac and knickknacks that have been collected over the course of Prentiss' 36-year marriage to actor/director Richard Benjamin. The glass coffee table in front of the sofa is so full of candy dishes and other objects d'art that I can hardly find room for my tape recorder. "I don't find housework demeaning," says the 58-year-old actress. "I find it gives me order and strength. And if I was living in an apartment by myself, I might not hire someone to clean it. I might do it myself for the calming effect." Maybe so. But, clearly, Paula Prentiss is no Stepford wife.

That label, "Stepford wife," has become such a part of our vocabulary and our collective subconscious, that even those who've never seen the movie know that it symbolizes femininity domesticity. Produced in 1975 by Foxmar Pictures and di-



Funny girl & femme fatale: Paula Prentiss is not only among our 50 Sexiest, but one of the 50 most startling actresses of all time.

rected by Bryan Forbes, *THE STEPFORD WIVES* didn't surface on video until 22 years later. The abridged plot: scheming husbands of the Stepford community have been systematically replacing their untidy brides with smiling, cookie-baking, big-breasted automatons. Prentiss and Katharine Ross play housewives who poke their noses into the Men's Club (which looks as ominous as it sounds), and eventually suffer the conse-

quences.

"I thought the script was funny," says Prentiss, who has proven herself equally adept with comedy (*MAN'S FAVORITE SPORTS*, *WHAT'S NEW PUSSYCAT?*) and drama (*IN HARM'S WAY*, *THE PARALLAX VIEW*). "I didn't see it, particularly, as a women's lib movie. I just saw it as fun. I admit, I have an unusual sense of humor."

"Did you get a sense that the movie would become an icon of the women's lib movement?" I query.

"Not really," she replies. "I was just so involved in the fact that I was working again and I had my baby there. You're thinking about your own particular things."

I lean forward on the sofa and squint: "So you're telling me that you had absolutely no clue this film was making a feminist statement?"

And she leans forward and says, "I just knew all the men in it were jerks."

I inquire about the kitchen scene, which is genuinely scary but shaded with black humor. Ms. Ross confronts Prentiss, only to find that Prentiss isn't really Prentiss, but some apron-wearing facsimile. When Ross stabs the impersonator in the stomach, Robo-Prentiss goes bonkers, throwing

continued on page 68

percent of women can hear children. Richardson is caught trying to slip past the US border, and is sent to a concentration camp where she's groomed to be a handmaid, i.e. the surrogate mother for the child of military commander Robert Duvall and his wife, Faye Dunaway. Richardson has an illegal affair with Duvall's chauffeur, Aiden Quinn—a crime punishable by death—and must escape with the child she carries in her womb.

45 MARINA SIRTIS

Her "I-feel-your-pain" approach to therapy on *STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION* triggers my gag reflex every time, but if you can focus on other facets of the starship's Counselor Deanna Troi—her lust for chocolate, for example—then she becomes a little easier to swallow. Though her character's goody-two-shoes personality can become pretty annoying, it doesn't take a Betazoid telepath to know that Sirtis' hedonistic body more than makes up for it.

46 ALICE KRIGE

She was the Borg Queen in 1986's *STAR TREK: FIRST CONTACT*. Our protagonists in the Star Trek universe have encountered many a hostile life form before, but none as terrifying and indestructible as the galaxy-plundering Borg Collective. As overlord of this race, Alice Krige is as voracious as she is beautiful. She plays the part with a repulsive seductiveness that really gets under your skin.

Krige as Zaphyr in *TWILIGHT OF THE ICE NYMPHS*. Her performance as a Borg Queen earned a Saturn award.





weapons. During a bizarre accident that converts her co-workers into homicidal psychotics, Quinlan's the only one who keeps her cool and follows emergency protocol. And, hey, did I mention? She looks great in uniform.

48 HEATHER MENZIES

She's an underrated actress who's no slouch in the sci-fi genre. In 1988, Menzies played Kristine, the daughter of a mad scientist who's trying to transmute a man into a Klingon Cobra. A budding ophthalmologist in her own right, she attempts to save the life of the hunky guinea pig (Dirk Benedict). In 1977, Menzies



Debating in **THE SOUND OF MUSIC** ('76), Menzies—8 years later—posed for *Playboy* and received a \$55,000.

played the recurrent role of "Jessica" in **LOGAN'S RUN**, a TV series spun-off from the movie. When the show was cancelled the following year, Menzies returned to feature films with **PERANHA**. Written by John Sayles, directed by Joe Dante and executive produced by Roger Corman, the black comedy is loaded as a classic (beware of the awful remake). Menzies plays a nosing person investigator who enlightens unsuspecting vacationers to a breed of genetically mutated piranha, engineered as secret weapons during the Vietnam War.

49 AEON FLUX

Meet the very anime, gun-totin' heroine who plays the title role in the MTV series. Created by Peter Chung and articulated by Denise Potter (who also voices Angela in HBO's **SPAWN** series), Aeon Flux is a beautiful secret agent from the future who's mission is to destroy an evil organization that's jeopardizing the world. Says



"I'm Aeon Flux. My mission is to assassinate Terror Goodchild. Is everybody listening? Do you believe me?"

Chung of his femme fatale, "There's a seductive power of violence on film. Her whole design and the way she looks and moves is engineered purely to evoke that attraction. You find that she's completely unreal. What I was trying to go for was a kind of surrealism." Ready for the action now, **Danger Boy?**

50 THE USS ENTERPRISE 1701-D

Yep, the galaxy-class stardust helmed by Captain Jean-Luc Picard in **STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION**—the ultimate in intergalactic travel. Captain Kirk's *Enterprise* may have had a better sense of humor, but the more modern *Enterprise D* is definitely sleeker and sexier, not quite so utilitarian as her predecessor. Voiced by Majal Barrett, wife of **TREK** creator Gene Roddenberry, *Enterprise D* comes complete with a Holodeck—a virtual reality play area for grown-ups that's as limitless as your own fantasies. □

The U.S.S. *Enterprise*: the of girls' been a central character in the **STAR TREK** franchise, e.g. the **CG** games.



47 KATHLEEN QUINLAN

We humans are obviously obsessed with the genesis of our own creation. Case in point: pregnant women tend to be a staple in science-fiction cinema. Confronting with the theme, Kathleen Quinlan's unborn fetus saves her life in 1965's **WARNING SIGN**. The actress plays a security officer hired by a "top secret" government facility that produces chemical

Quinlan's no stranger to the genre, what with roles in **THE LIGHT ZONE**, **THE MOVIE**, **EVENT HORIZON**, et al.





A woman in a black bikini is posing in front of a large, dark-colored robot. The robot has a prominent gun-like arm on the left side. The woman is looking towards the camera with a slight smile.

Do robots fantasize?
Blistering bombshell
Kim Parise (SHOW-
GIRLS, EVIL SISTER)
is introduced to sci-fi
icon, Robby the Ro-
bot. "Robby is more
popular than ever!"
says robot coordina-
tor Fred Berton. The
sci-fi knight is mak-
ing a comeback in
prime time sitcoms.

SEXY ROBOTS

THE PRIVATE LIFE OF ROBBY THE ROBOT: TALES OF HEAVY METAL MACHISMO.

PROFILE BY
AMELIA KINKADE

"When you've finished with my foot rub, go in the kitchen and make us some margaritas," I would say.

"Would 60 gallons be sufficient?" he would ask.

My kind of man. That's the conversation I would have with my perfect dream mate—or Robby the Robot who, by definition, is pretty much one and the same. Robby is tall, dark, handsome and has terribly polite manners.

If my description provokes some confusion, I suggest you rent the 1956 classic **FORBIDDEN PLANET** and refresh your memory. The film was Hollywood's first multi-million dollar science-fiction epic, and Robby shamelessly stole scenes from dazzling, 19-year-old Anne Francis, relative newcomer Leslie Nielsen and even Oscar nominee Walter Pidgeon. Refusing to rest on his laurels, Robby again played himself in a B&W film, tailored for the matinee market, titled **THE INVISIBLE BOY** (1957). He also shot supporting or cameo roles for **THE TWILIGHT ZONE**,

THE ADDAMS FAMILY, **LOVE BOAT**, **LOST IN SPACE**, **MORK AND MINDY** and **COLUMBO**.

Forty years after making his movie debut, Robby is still going strong. Unlike leading men over 40—Sean Connery and Michael Douglas, watch out!—Robby requires minimal grooming: no hair transplant, no eye-lift, no tummy-tuck. Robby is as close to the fountain of youth as any.

Damn it, I can't go on. This is all a Hallmark card, I'm perpetuating a lie. You want to know the truth? Can you handle it? The original Robby the Robot was

Comedy starlet Nina Foch (HEAD HERE) poses w/ Fred Serrano's replication of Gert. "This robot was an alien crossover in **THE DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL**, my favorite sci-fi film," says Foch. "Gert's as powerful...and as big! Other robots just can't compare."

PHOTOGRAPHY BY
JAN DEEN

canned...we're talking auto graveyard (Hollywood still buzzes about the tin man's fleeting fame—was it the hot women, hard drinking, both?). But the new Robby—photographed for this profile—and his refurbished brethren are handcrafted, meticulously detailed duplicates of "movie star robots," and each is endowed with a shelf-life of eternity.

The wizard behind Robby's reconstruction is Fred Barton, affectionately christened "The Robot Man." In an amazing balance of technology and art, Barton has not only reproduced Robby to the nth detail, he's actually improved upon the original. I had the pleasure of touring Barton's robot museum, which doubles as a living room. Walking into the foyer, one experiences the same thrill as boarding the *Star Wars* ride at Disneyland, only better. And yet, the impact is also quite sobering. A seven-foot Robby greets you by reciting *FORBIDDEN PLANET* dialogue that's off-perfected—into the ground—by sci-fi aficionados. But coming from Robby, or his reasonable facsimile, those familiar lines resonate with significance. As your vision traverses to other quarters of the gallery, a warm light hushes off the armor of other "cloned" knights: *LOST IN SPACE*'s "bubble-headed boob," whose TV tag line was "Danger, Will Robinson," has been impeccably replicated as Robby's companion. Looming in the corner was an eight-foot reproduction of Gort from *THE DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL* (1951): though Darth Vader stood behind me in combative pose, he was about as intimidating as Arnold Stang compared to *EARTH'S* metallic sentinel. Barton activated Gort's eye mask: the visor slid open, revealing a pulsing, disintegration beam that I presumed would dematerialize my tape recorder (I almost left a puddle on Fred's nice hardwood floor). Gort would make a dandy burglar

"When *FORBIDDEN PLANET* debuted, it really set the tone for sci-fi films: until then, genre films were silly, what with cold war things or atom bomb zombies."



FF seven women (l-r): Debra Stevens poses with Fred Barton (The Robot Man) and her meticulous reproduction of *FORBIDDEN PLANET*'s Robby the Robot.

alarm—not to mention a cool-looking lawn ornament.

Barton hit a button on the remote control box. All of the robots, in unison, articulated trademark sound effects in a cacophony of electronic acoustics. I tried to scream questions at Barton over the din.

"You have the license to duplicate famous film robots for sale to the public...can you hear me? How many Robby the Robots do you sell per year?" I asked.

"They all vary," replied Barton. "It's been a couple of years in the planning and making of these robots, and we make a few models of Robby at various price ranges. You're looking at the high-end Robby. [Barton gloated over his magnificent creation with an affection usually reserved only for newslayers.] Then there's a medium Robby and there's a basic statue of Robby. They range all the way from \$15,000 to \$75,000."

"Seventy five grand?," I asked. "Only smokes."

"There's only ten of those, seven of which are sold. There are only three left."

"You sold seven out of ten already? In the first year?"

"Right. It's a very limited edition, and some people have waited their whole lives to snatch him up. That's why I make two other editions which are cheaper. There's one that looks just like this, but it doesn't have as many functions and features. It sells for \$25,000. And I have one that's just a straight statue and it's \$15,000. It's a very popular model. There are a lot of science fiction fans who go in for that one. We have a number of celebrities buying the high-end one. There are some serious collectors and film fans who have the income while some people say, 'But for 75 grand, I could get a Mercedes.' And I say, 'This is for the guy who already has his Mercedes.' I had a

guy in here who was interested in buying a Robby, and he said he just couldn't pass up buying his second Lamborghini Countach."

[And I thought I was being extravagant of Pac 'n Save's sidewalk sale last week.]

"But you can see from the work on them, these aren't just props," Barton continued. "They are literally flawless. I saw a bag void in this market. Everything out there is either foam or small, and I know there are a lot of people out there who want something a cut above a prop. I was always so into the robots that, when people started wanting me to make them available for sale, I went to Warner Bros. and licensed Robby. They gave me the exclusive licensing of Robby so that I could build and sell these. I was the first person in over 40 years."

Hitting the remote, Barton showed me exactly what "high end" Robby could do. The head rotated around in a magical light show while diminutive hammers, concealed inside the chest, clattered away like a possessed popcorn machine. "They do everything but walk," said Barton, who declined to make his robots mobile because the weight of each unit would inflict serious damage upon floors and furniture.

I assumed that Barton, prior to earning his "Robot Man" handle, was educated at art school. Right? "No," he shrugged. "I was working as the head writer for a large electronics firm, doing all their in-house ad work. I was really getting tired of the drily grind—the traffic on the 405 freeway every day—and I had my own video production company. I had restored the original Robby in 1974, when I was back in high school. I didn't do anything with the robot after that except a *LOVE BOAT* episode and a few personal appearances at conventions."

"So you built the first reproduction from scratch?"

"Sure, I built everyone of these robots myself. I go through every painstaking part of the process, from the mold making to designing the computer board inside of them. I also have some software engineers involved to make the software codes, because every little thing has to be specified on the computer and programmed into the robot. There are seven computers inside Robby to give the commands to turn the head, to turn on the scanners and the gyros, what speed, how long they should be on, when to turn the lights on...everything has to be choreographed. Just like a Disneyland or JURASSIC PARK ride, this is the same kind of computer technology. I really wanted to make a real Robby the Robot as opposed to the original, which was just a costume with a guy inside walking around."

"How'd you learn how to do this, Fred?"

"Well, it was really trial and error. I started making plaster molds and thermoflexing plastic in my mother's oven, just making small pieces and slowly but surely, I would get the shapes right. Jumping ahead 20 years, I got my degree in film and decided to build the robot from Irwin Allen's TV series, LOST IN SPACE. I built him because he was originally designed by the same guy who designed Robby. But he's not as charming or as popular as Robby. I don't make him available for sale. I just built him because I think he's neat."

"I don't manufacture Gort for sale either, because Robby is so much more popular than these other robots. THE DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL was made in 1951 and I think Gort is too far removed from the public's consciousness. I don't think he's that marketable an item, but I sure love him. I'm sure there are thousands of people out there who do too, but whether or not they would spend thousands of dollars to own him is another matter."

"If you do not speak English, I'm at your disposal with 187 other languages and dialects. For your convenience, I am monitored to respond to the name, Robby."



Fred Barton's facsimile of Gort in a below-magical, attracting sci-fi scenes Evelyn Sadness (ATTACK OF THE 68-FT. CENTERFOLD) & Veronica Tabor (FEMALINE)

"I actually don't make that much of a profit in the selling price compared to all the work that goes into them. Everything is brass or aluminum or titanium. I have them painted at a Ferrari car shop and that's why the finish is so beautiful. Then I have three different machinists make some of the hand-made detail and complex mechanisms. It's all state of the art electronics and it really shows. A lot of it is sculpture, but I guess Robby really is quite complicated."

I mean, it took the MGM prop shop over a year to build the first Robby and it cost them over \$125,000 which was just unheard of in the 1950's. Even today, it would be like spending over a million dollars on a single prop. So really, \$70,000 is quite a bargain in '90s money, considering how much it cost MGM back in the '50s."

Waxing nostalgic, Barton wistfully turned back the clock "When FORBIDDEN PLANET debuted at Grauman's Chinese—of course, I

wasn't born yet—it was quite an event. They had Robby walking around in the lobby. It really set the tone for science fiction films from thereafter because, up until that time, the genre films were kind of silly. It would always be a cold war thing or atom bomb zombies. But after FORBIDDEN PLANET and THE DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL, the studios started investing more money and more quality into science fiction films. Today, science fiction films are Hollywood's highest grossers, what with E.T., CLOSE ENCOUNTERS and STAR WARS. I think Robby and FORBIDDEN PLANET started it all. The entire MGM studio, all four sound stages, were working on FORBIDDEN PLANET, so that's why the movie turned out as well as it did. Also, I credit the film's editor who cut a lot of scenes out. I saw the work print of the film, and there were all these big drawn-out scenes that slowed the film down. There was this really silly scene about Anne Francis' character and a unicorn, and other nonsense about the monsters from the id. Thankfully, those scenes were all shaved."

I commented that the movie's Freudian scenario—a father, shielding his daughter, externalizes his id as a physical predator—was pretty sophisticated stuff for '50s science fiction.

"Yes, Freud was running amuck," smiled Barton. "The movie's premise has been pirated over and over. SPHERE, a Dustin Hoffman movie, completely took the 'monsters from the id' concept. I was enjoying the movie until I realized it was a blatant rip-off of FORBIDDEN PLANET. Also, FORBIDDEN PLANET was very progressive. Back then, robots were branded as killers or assassins. Robby was actually a butler with a dry sense of humor. He was also a protector. You could see what charm he had in the film, and I think that's even what struck me as a kid. Be-

sides, he looked so incredible. And now Robby is more popular than ever. They're making several lines of toys based on Robby like they did all the way back in the '50s, which was also the first [sci-fi movie franchise]."

Professionally, Robby the Robot has made a comeback. While screening a tape of Robby's guest appearance on **THE TONIGHT SHOW**, Barton enlightened me that "Warner Bros. plans to put Robby in a few series like **FRIENDS**, **SUDDENLY SUSAN**, **THE DREW CAREY SHOW**... They want to write him on as a walk-on."

Affection for Robby is contagious. Even "high end" robots, \$75K a pop, are sold as soon as they're assembled; matter of fact, Barton had scheduled an appointment with tentative customer Tim Allen. "Gee, I hope I can afford it," cracked the sitcom star who nails over \$1 million per **HOME IMPROVEMENT** episode. "We're also making a special signature series of Robby for **FAO Schwartz**," explained Barton. "They're coming out with a new catalogue, and Robby will be in the New York store next year."

As I pack up my recorder and bid adieu to Barton, Robby the Robot has the last word. "If you do not speak English, I am at your disposal with 187 other languages along with their various dialect and sub-languages." Jeez! If he can speak in sub-languages, Robby can kiss-off Barton and be his own agent. And 187 languages? I have enough trouble ordering off the menu in a French restaurant. I vowed to borrow him the next time I go bargain-shopping in Tijuana.

Hold on, I almost forgot the plug: Wanna buy a Robby? Just wanna browse? You're invited to cruise through Barton's Robot Museum. Tap in www.therobotman.com on your keyboard. □



"Oh, I resisted Fred Barton's recreation of Robby the Robot," admits Vanessa Taylor. "I thought Robby was just another Hollywood sell. But he's a great character, and he doesn't indulge in tobacco or drugs. And he's a heck with a steady disposition."



ED WOOD'S "I WOKE UP EARLY THE DAY I DIED"

THIS ADAPTATION OF WOOD'S
SCRIPT IS NO "PLAN NINE."

By PAUL WARDLE

Decades ago, Ed Wood (l., w. Isabella Dolores Fuller in *GLENN OR GLENDA*) tried to cast B-porners Aldo Ray and John Cassavese in his aborted production of *I WOKE UP EARLY THE DAY I DIED*. Actors recruited for the '68 adaptation include Christine Ricci (l.) as a lady love, and (below, l.-r.) Sandra Bernhard, Martha Kne, Janelle Taylor, Thomas and Tippi Hedren, Billy Zane.



Archivists note that Ed Wood (1924-1978), the late Prince of Poverty Row Programmers, wrote some of the worst films ever made (sample *ORGY OF THE DEAD* [1] and/or *FIVE LOOSE WOMEN*). Sometimes, he was a double-threat, directing and writing even worse movies (*PLAN 9 FROM OUTER SPACE*, *BRIDE OF THE MONSTER*). But his leg-

cy—home movies about nothing and produced for next to nothing—have fueled cult adoration, prompting Tim Burton's 1994 bio, *ED WOOD*. So what if one of Wood's scripts—never realized during the filmmaker's lifetime—survived his death? Directing *I WOKE UP EARLY THE DAY I DIED*, Aris Ispakopoulos adapted one of Wood's chestnuts. Though but-





Mo'Nique (bottom) (REBECCA HILLS/NEA, SPY HUNT) plays a supporting role. Opted a earlier, "WOKE UP has an Ed Wood picture so the story does not make much sense, resembling like a lost puppy through heavy traffic."

tressed with privileges inaccessible to Wood, the film is wildly uneven—although not a total failure.

Premiering last September at the Toronto International Film Festival, *WOKE UP*—though eagerly anticipated—provoked many attendees to walk out of the press screening. Those tolerant enough to sit through the entire film were treated to a who's who of bizarre archetypes, including cameo appearances by Wood cronies, Milla "Vampire" Nurmi and Conrad Brooka, both veterans of *PLAN 9*.

The star is Billy Zane, however, his screen visibility notwithstanding, the actor never articulates a single word from Wood's screenplay. In fact, exempting one actress, none of the thespians audibly recite dialogue. Certain plot developments, gauged by *Hipolito* as significant enough to require explanation, are provided by on-screen captions. These surrogate subtitles, rendered into a typewriter-like font and presumably lifting lines from Wood's script, are superimposed over the camera shot.

Hipolito assembled an eclectic roster of character actors but then, intentionally or unintentionally, miscast them. Performers artist/alternative rocker Ann Magnusen plays a frumpy loan officer. Sandra Bernhard, as a stripper, shows up at a funeral wearing a low-cut black rubber gown. Eartha Kitt purrs her way through a nightclub song (hers is the film's only audible voice). A couple of carnival residents include John Ritter as a mustached sharpshooter, and a whip-wielding Karen Black clad in push-up bustier. Christina Ricci portrays a teenage prostitute, Bud Cort has a brief cameo as an effeminate clothier and Hitchcock diva Tyne Deyron is a deaf dowager who Zane throws off a cliff. Tara Reid (7:7), cast in last summer's *URBAN LEGEND*, also has a cameo.

The "plot" concerns an escaped mental patient (Zane) who steals a nurse's uniform, ineptly commits a robbery and slashes the money in a coffin during a funeral service. Tortured by loud noises which precipitate psychotic episodes, Zane butchers the hired mourners. His bethched attempts to retrieve the loot seem somehow linked to his eccentric acquaintances.

Hipolito tries to inject a sense of fun as homage to the late filmmaker's brand of schlock. But the comedy in Wood's original movies is unintentional. In contrast, *WOKE UP* sometimes tries too hard to be funny, even belaboring its in-jokes about Wood's trademark kink. Long, loving shots of cross-dressers, a bound and gagged nurse and women's slapped bottoms alternate with grisly murders and Bernhardt's burlesque number.

Bumbling cops, stock footage, propaganda loops from the 1950's and other



A critic noted, "Seasoned actors (Billy Zane & Christina Ricci) has it up as it they were members of Wood's recurring troupe."

Wood staples are added to the mix, at times resembling the frenetic pace of a lesser Coen Brothers effort. *Hipolito* seems desperate for audiences to share his conviction that "Uncle Ed would have wanted it this way." Possibly, but camp and kitsch were inherently by-products of Wood's inaptitude. *Hipolito* tried to fake the same panache with a generous budget, a high-profile list of players and the conceit that he's superior to the amateurs of his precursor.

The cameos only distract from Wood's paper-thin story. Perhaps simulating the sophistry of Wood's unprofessional casts, most of the actors appear confused or lifeless; but it all seems a pale imitation. Perhaps *WOKE UP* will eventually be acknowledged as a cult fave, but I seriously doubt it will match *PLAN 9*'s longevity. □

Anne Heche

DEVIL UNRAVENS

DISCUSSING HOSTILE REACTION TO THE REMAKE, SHE COMMENTS ON THE VIOLENCE, COLOR & SHOWER SCENE.

BY DOUGLAS EBY

The role of Marion Crane, the original *PSYCHO* siren whose shower was imperiled by worse than bad plumbing, is indelibly linked to Janet Leigh. Cast in the remake as the comely Crane, actress Anne Heche doesn't lose sleep over the risk of censure (i.e. "denigrating" Leigh's legacy). Matter of fact, Heche describes the whole thing as "a dream of a shoot. I didn't even feel we were even shooting a movie, I felt like we were somehow a whole group of people who got together to have fun. I attribute everything about this movie to [director] Gus Van Sant. His directing gives you a freedom because you just feel at ease all the time, you never feel a pressure. He gives you a freedom to explore. Some directors think if you shame people, or make it all uptight, it's going to come out better. But when it's easy and fun, you're going to have more freedom to explore. And that's what he allows."

"No one else could have done this movie except Gus. He's the only one who could understand [Alfred Hitchcock, director of the 1960 classic] and put a new spin on it. So I attribute the whole magic of this movie to him—although he, in his humility, would say it's because Hitchcock gave him the blueprint. Or, actually, his metaphor was that he already had the recipe."

One of the original's prime recipes, brewed-up 38 years earlier, prompted



PSYCHO Norman (Vince Vaughn) meets Marion (Anne Heche). "It's a new exploration of a psychological thriller."

global notoriety. And though some question the "lust" of its second helping—especially when the chef isn't Hitchcock—Heche proclaims that Van Sant was "ecstatic" because the shower scene was wrapped in only three days. Mr. Hitchcock required no less than five days to shoot the same scene.

One of the "magical" aspects of the production, says Heche, was that day #1 of the remake's production turned out to be Janet Leigh's birthday. "Gus sent her some flowers, and they had

some exchanges back and forth. I think there are some rumors about her being not too thrilled about our film, but I hope she comes to see it in celebration of Hitchcock. I was going to say '[See you at] the premiere,' but I don't think we're even going to have one because Hitchcock didn't have one—and Gus, as much as he can, is doing whatever Hitchcock did. He's using the same shocking script."

Though detractors have trivialized the remake as only a colorized Doppelgänger, Heche claims it has an identity of its own. She refers to her summer '98 film *RETURN TO PARADISE*. "An actress could look at my role and say, 'I would have played that character differently'; some would think 'I could have played that better.' But when you look at *PSYCHO*—because it's a psychological thriller—if you take the body of a person and put another mind in it, it's more psychologically thrilling. So for the actors, for me particularly, it was thrilling to do behavior-wise what Janet Leigh had

done, and put my mind in there—and put my mind on the words that, at a time in the past, were strong. To me, they're now daft and a little unconscious. If you watch two people do exactly the same behavior, what comes out of their mouth and out of their personality is completely different. They do it in plays, but no one's ever had the courage to do it in movies."

William H. Macy (who plays "Sheriff Chambers") has made a similar comment, regarding an actor's latitude



Anne Heche reviews Janet Leigh's *PSYCHO* shower: Hitchcock shot the scene in 5 days; Gus Van Sant wrapped the same scene, for his '68 remake, in 3 days

to incarnate a venerable screen character, in a separate interview: "If I go to see *Hamlet* four times, a lot of times the set looks very similar. So it's the same set and it's in a theater, the only thing that's changed is the cast and the director—and it's a different play every time. I predict you're going to see a different movie, even though we did a sort of homage."

Heche admits that she's not familiar with Hitchcock's *PSYCHO*: "In my naïveté, I only saw it the night before I met Gus, which I loved! I went in and was like, 'This is so cool—of course, you're remaking it!' And then Gus showed me this stack of books that had been written about the things I admired about the 1960 *PSYCHO*, and I was like, 'Oh boy, I'm really behind the times, aren't I?' I didn't know people did case studies on it for college courses. But I kind of like it that I came to it fresh. I didn't have a preconceived notion about it, and Ellen [DeGeneres] didn't tell me anything about it—we just

watched it together."

Returning to the iconic shower scene, and the remake's shift from black & white to color, Heche declares the modification to "not about the gore of it. But some of the metaphors are going to be lost because, in black and white, there are different shadows—both of mind and body. And in color, there are some things that are going to seem to be more extreme. But certainly it was

not done for shock value, or to be more gory or anything. It's just that it may be more shocking because it is in color, and there will be different interpretations because of that."

Acknowledging criticism from loyalists about the "concent" of Van Sant's remake, Heche hopes "the people who are getting behind this negatively [will see] they're after the wrong thing. And I just hope that people see this as not only an honoring of

a brilliant director, and a brilliant film, but of a new exploration of a psychological thriller which we are lacking today. They don't do it anymore. They do screams and hollers and death scenes, left and right, but they don't understand the psychological thriller. And Gus is really reintroducing the art of this, through another filmmaker back into the consciousness of filmmaking. And I hope people get that. It's not about taking it away from anybody, it's about expanding it and understanding the consciousness."

Heche & Vaughn have a happy meal. Joseph Stefano, who wrote the '60 script, approved of this replay from the original (I didn't feel it was the same film)



Heche points to another venue for Gen X audiences to evaluate the remake: "Somebody told me you never know a movie until you see it twice. You can't even get a movie until you see it three times, and maybe on the fourth time you're going to get a little more what it's about. So everyone who has this incredible attachment to the original *PSYCHO* saw it in its shock value. Now, with the shock value taken away, maybe they will get another psychological hit on what it's about. And it's about people. It's about the mind."

Another aspect of Hitchcock's "shock value" was that audiences had been predisposed to be very confident that leading ladies survived. Joseph Stefano, who wrote the original *PSYCHO* script, noted in another published interview that—by 1960—Janet Leigh was a major star whose career had spanned 15 years. "The whole point of casting her," said Stefano, "was because the audience would come unglued by the fact that Janet Leigh was supposedly dead 25 minutes into the movie. That's something that I don't think will work today. Whether people will be surprised that Anne Heche is killed, I kind of doubt." Heche responds to Stefano's summarization with, "Right—and does that matter? Just because you know it, does that take away from the movie? To me, I'm glad everybody knows I'm dead. Great. But could you watch my performance instead of waiting for me to get killed? Because that's the interest behind it."

Heche comments on other comparisons between the two films: "You saw Janet Leigh, now you're going to see me; you saw Anthony Perkins, now you're going to see Vince Vaughn. The interaction between the two is what's interesting in the movie. The dialogue that Joseph originally wrote is what's interesting. The difference between what it was then, and what it is now, is what's interesting. It's not interesting that I got stabbed? Fantastic! You shouldn't be interested in that, anyway. That's not the point of the movie."



PSYCHO (54): The voyeuristic Bates spies on Marion as she disrobes. (The '60 original upset critics: "You present the film's 'symptoms of stomach-throwing nerves,' while Exquisite revealed it's 'a reflection of an unpleasant, unstable mind.'")

So I loved that that whole notion of it is taken out ...

"Everything presents a new challenge. I think Gus would have allowed any challenge I wanted. But I wanted the script to stay exactly the same because I wanted to make old words modern. I also wanted to step into somebody else's body with a different mind. That was just my take on it: just like Gus had done, matching as much as possible, like a reincarnation of the [original] film. I wanted to match what he was doing. But with his mind and my mind it's, therefore, a different movie. Then you add all the other different players, everybody was doing the

behavior of someone else, with a new mind. And that, to me, played-in beautifully to what the movie is about."

Joseph Stefano was on board as a consultant, but reportedly wanted to closely adhere to his original script. Heche insists she "didn't want to change any of his words" and that qualified for "a great relationship" with the writer. "I think everybody did," she adds. "He was very celebratory about it." Heche mentions that her role required only a 4-week shoot, during which time "everyone" agreed not to deviate from the script, however, she's uncertain if that fidelity was perpetuated after her departure. "But everyone got into the idea that we were doing the same thing," she says.

Heche again acknowledges Van Sant's metaphor: "If you give one recipe to a chef, and you give another chef the same recipe, no matter what, it's going to come out different. And that is the beauty of this movie. I had a recipe, but somehow it came out completely differently. No one has ever done a film like this before. It was wonderful. And it's Gus' unique stamp. He was trying to do this for ten years and no one would allow him to do it, and now he did."

The actress decrees that "everything in a psychological thriller because it's always about the mind behind the character. I like to expand that as much as possible. I don't like to stay in the same genre. I never have. But as far as the mind of a character, that's what always fascinates me. This role presented the fact I was in the same behavior that was the challenge. The next role will be a different challenge. But I don't want to say I'm going after thrillers, because I don't think thrillers are made the way *PSYCHO* is made any more. I hope it will reintroduce that genre and actually challenge the audience to think a bit. I hope people get intrigued about, 'Hey, maybe I can think and not just watch blood and guts.' That's my highest blood for this. If there's any filmmaker who can do it, it's Gus." □

Joseph Stefano

DEATH RAILGUN

THE SCREENWRITER OF THE '60 ORIGINAL ON "PSYCHO," SEQUELS AND THE REMAKE.

BY FRANK GARCIA



Janet Leigh in the original shower scene. Joseph Stefano, who adapted the '60 script for the remake, notes, "I think there will be shades that will be different. I don't think any actor wants to get up there and imitate Tony Perkins or Janet."

Although director Gus Van Sant could lean on a 38-year old script for his remake of Alfred Hitchcock's *PSYCHO*, he still needed a screenwriter. Minor changes were necessary so Van Sant turned to Joseph Stefano, the original script's author.

"I was very surprised when I heard Van Sant was going to do it," says Stefano, who was producer of the original *OUTER LIMITS* TV series (1963). "We met and had lunch and had a very nice conversation. He's a very creative, interesting man! He told me he wanted to do this the way Broadway plays are revived, rather than a remake where so many changes are made. He wanted to do it almost word-for-word and shot-for-shot. I thought that was an interesting way to bring it into the 1990s. So I was very happy about that."

Stefano applied a "polish," modifying little more than chronological developments. "My feeling is that the audience would not be able to identify with the 1960 young woman—very attractive with a good job and a man she wants—and risk all that for \$40,000 which, these days, wouldn't last a year. We talked about [rewriting it] to something like half a million dollars. There's other minor changes like the price of a motel room, things like that."

His enthusiasm not withstanding, Stefano admits the remake of Hitchcock's classic has provoked hostility. "I hear from critics, friends, family, movie-goers, neighbors. I don't get any positive feedback from any of them. The spark that I'm getting from people is, 'Why were you even involved in such a thing?' I just say, 'Be fair. Wait until it's out to see it.' I'm trying to stop what I feel is the kind of criticism

that can hurt the opening of the movie."

At the time of this interview, Stefano only had a brief glimpse of the proceedings. "I've seen a few sequences cut together. I don't know what this movie will be like when it's finished. All I know is that we have a different director, different actors, different sets, the only thing that's the same is the script and the music."

The footage that Stefano screened was a revival of the scene where Norman Bates (Vince Vaughn) invites Marion Crane (Janet Leigh) into his back parlor

for a bite to eat. "It was my dialogue being spoken again after 38 years! To hear it again..." [laughs] They were saying exactly the same words, but I didn't feel like it was the same movie. There was a difference and I don't know how to describe that to you.

"It's exciting to me to see different interpretations. I never liked Tony Perkins' subsequent versions of Norman Bates. I never thought he captured it again." Perkins, who played Bates in Hitchcock's *PSYCHO*, reprised the role in three sequels.

"I thought it must be like what playwrights must enjoy because plays are always being revived," continues Stefano. "I would imagine Arthur Miller must have seen 100 and some productions of *Death of a Salesman*. I think Tennessee Williams saw a tremendous number of versions of his plays. It's true of all playwrights that they get to see and hear their characters interpreted by various actors. Screenwriters don't have that. Generally, often as a rule, when you write a screenplay and the movie is made—that's it! If they remake it, they usually change it so the screenplay is no longer recognizable. I mean, would you recognize last year's *A PERFECT MURDER* as [a remake of] *DIAL M FOR MURDER*?"

But Stefano acknowledges, "If *PSYCHO* makes a lot of money, you're going to be inundated with word-for-word, shot-for-shot remakes of movies made before. I'm talking about *CITIZEN KANE*, *THE GRAPES OF WRATH*, *MY DARLING CLEMENTINE*, the movies that people have loved and are kind of our signposts through the years. I can't stop these people [from doing remakes], we don't own them. The studios own them. There's no way anybody could stop the owners of *CITIZEN KANE* from making another one. All we can do is not go see it."

"If the new *PSYCHO* bombs, then they'll say, 'Let's go back to the old way where we changed all the characters.' The thing that is that is different about this is Gus Van Sant didn't say to me is, 'Please rewrite Marion Crane as the editor of a New York magazine,' or 'Let's set it in the south of France.' He said, 'Let's do the same thing!'" □

IRWIN ALLEN'S JUNGLE WOMAN

ALLEN'S SCI-FI SIREN: WHEN SHE WASN'T "LOST IN SPACE,"
VITINA MARCUS DETOURED TO THE OTHER "LOST WORLD."

BY MITCH PERSONS



Marcus as Athira, *The Girl from the Green Dimension*, on *LOST IN SPACE* (1967). She recalls "performing on wires with a harness" for her levitation scenes.

It was 1960, thirty-five years before author Michael Crichton banged-out his *Jurassic Park* sequel, *The Lost World*. Producer/director Irwin Allen, who pioneered the "disaster" movie trend and was later linked with schlocky sci-fi entertainment, helmed *THE LOST WORLD*, an extremely loose adaptation of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's novel. The book had already been translated into a 1924 silent film, *THE LOST WORLD*; Willis O'Brien's stop-motion technology, applied to miniature dinosaurs, impacted unsophisticated patrons with the same sense of wonder that 1993 audiences experienced with *JURASSIC PARK*'s CGI effects. Would Allen's 1960 Technicolor remake further push the fix harbinger of its silent predecessor? Nope. Latex fins and frills were glued to iguanas and lizards; the critters were optically, and unconvincingly, inflated to behemoth-size. Writer Bill Warren (*Keep Watching the Skies!*) recounted his childhood viewing of the film nostalgically: "... a lumbering, synthetic bore—big-budget Hollywood SF filmmaking at its dreary worst." The film boasted a fairly competent cast: Claude Rains, Michael Rennie, David Hedison, Fernando Lamas and Richard Haydn. Jill St. John, as a spoiled heiress, screamed a lot. As the intrepid explorers triumph over more cheesy effects (including the laziest "carnivorous plant" since *TARZAN'S DESERT MYSTERY*), they encounter a

velvety, scaring-clad "native girl" who's putting some serious distance between herself and a giant spider. Definitely a welcome distraction from the pet farm that camouflaged as dinosaurs, she was worth the price of admission for male teenagers. Presumably, actress Vitina Marcus was equally content to play the role: after all, she didn't have to utter one single syllable of the script's banal dialogue.

Tall and slender, with dark, piercing eyes and a flash of auburn hair, Marcus subsequently appeared in Irwin Allen's television series: She was cast in a couple of episodes of *LOST IN SPACE*, *TIME TUNNEL* and *VOYAGE TO THE BOTTOM OF THE SEA*. She reprised her role as the "Native Girl" in one of the latter's 1964 episodes, *Turn Back the Clock*, replete with stock footage from *THE*



As the **THE LOST WORLD's** "Native Girl," Marcus was spared the script's dumb dialogue. Inset: Reprising the role, Marcus and co-star David Hedison re-created the stock footage from the film—as an episode of **VOYAGE TO THE BOTTOM OF THE SEA** (1968/69).

VITINA MARCUS

"People have said that Irwin Allen was very possessive. I wonder how much he held people back."

LOST WORLD and a reunion with series star, David Hedison. Surfacing in feature-length films (**TARAS BULBA**, **BEDTIME STORY**, **NEVER LOVE A STRANGER**), Marcus didn't abandon the TV medium, what with guest shots on **GUNSMOKE**, **RAWHIDE**, **HAVE GUN, WILL TRAVEL** and **THE MAN FROM U.N.C.L.E.**

Then something peculiar happened. Vitina Marcus vanished without a trace. It turns out, however, that she's been far from inactive. Recently, radio listeners in Nevada heard her sultry voice hosting *That Feminine Feeling*, an in-depth talk show. When contacted at her self-described "sanctuary" near Las Vegas, Marcus addressed my queries about her abrupt exodus from Hollywood...

"I was looking for idealism," the Brooklyn-born actress confided, "it seems that I went the gamut of things in Hollywood. There were very nice people, there were very violent people. There were all kinds of things going on, and I wanted to look for a special lifestyle. When I first left L.A., I went to live in Phoenix, Arizona in an ashram [spiritual commune] because



I'd been studying yoga. I was looking for something beyond what my lifestyle was. I learned a lot in the ashram, but not everything I was looking for. I next went to a UFO convention in Giant Rock, California and met some people who really opened my mind. Then I opened my own ashram in Toronto, Canada. But because my daughter Athena didn't want to stay there, and because we had family in Las Vegas, that's where we ended up.

"I really loved the Southwest," she continued. "I love the big, empty space. I love going out where there isn't any concrete or buildings or wires...where there aren't any of the city things. I feel that this is very important to me."

Her affinity for the Nevada desert notwithstanding, life was not particularly satisfying for Marcus. Not at first. Divorced and with two children to raise, she found herself working as a cocktail waitress in casinos along the Las Vegas Strip. "It was a nightmare for me!" groaned Marcus. "I worked the graveyard shift, so I slept an average of three hours a night.

The most awful part was people asking me for autographs at times, and I was very embarrassed. Also, everybody used to gossip about me. Why is she working in the casinos? I had a baby, my son Giuliano. I wasn't about to return to Hollywood and wonder who would give me a job. I think some people [in Hollywood] were a little upset with me that I just took off, and I don't know if they would have wanted to deal with me, anymore. I liked being independent, and I had to raise this child, so I stayed in Vegas."

Her lifetime praxis further separated Marcus from gigs as a cocktail waitress. "I'm basically a quiet person, and working in a casino was never my thing. I don't drink, I don't gamble, I don't smoke. I was always a reader, so I started reading more and more on my breaks. I educated myself. I studied real estate during the day. I kept at it and, by 1988, I got my license.

"Even at Lafayette High School I was a bookworm. I was a cheerleader. I was voted the prettiest girl in the school, but I just read and read. I was always carrying stacks of books out of the library. But I had always had an



Cast in the "Day of the Wizard" episode, Marcus—"a gypsy wife of a cryptid"—poses w/ son as star Kurt Russell in *TRAVELS OF JAMIE McPHERTERS* (1982)

interest in acting. After I graduated from Lafayette, I went directly to Lee Strasberg's Actors Studio in New York. I also studied with Frank Corsaro, who directed *A Hatful of Rain* on Broadway.

"I actually did an off-Broadway production of *Hatful*, playing the character of Putski. I played her as a very wealthy lady who decided to do a number, all these crazy things. After that, a few of us [at the Actors Studio] got together and did some scenes and invited all our agents. The next thing I knew, MCI had signed me to a contract and I was flown off to Hollywood."

Irwin Allen's *LOST WORLD* served as Marcus' movie debut. "20th [Century-Fox] wanted to sign me for a contract, but I felt that I didn't want to be under a contract. One day, Irwin saw me stopping into an elevator at 20th, and asked the security guard who I was. He then tracked me down and had me tested for *THE LOST WORLD*. I did a lot of work for Irwin after that. Some people have said that he was very possessive, he didn't like the idea of any of his people working for someone else. Sometimes I wonder just how

much he held people back. But I enjoyed working on a lot of his shows."

Indeed, one of Marcus' favorite roles was as the Girl from the *Green Dimension*, one of her *LOST IN SPACE* episodes. Directed by Harry Harris, she played an apparently weightless alien who floated around a befuddled Zachary Smith (Jonathan Harris) while seductively dropping verbal teasers ("Pretty, pretty Dr. Smith!"). "I really loved watching Jonathan and his character," grinned Marcus. "He was a very friendly person. I observed him coaching little Will [Mumy]. Jonathan enjoyed giving of himself and sharing his knowledge. He was a well-trained actor and he knew it—and he carried himself as such—but the fact that he was helpful, and giving of himself, showed a good inner character. I admired him for that."

The Green Girl, acknowledged Marcus, was hardly her only eccentric femme. "I've always done strange roles, like the lady Tarzan in *THE MAN FROM U.N.C.L.E.*. I had to swing through the trees with the Tarzan coil and share a tree

house with a gorilla! At one point, I had to pick up Robert Vaughn [the series' title character] and carry him off. I had been a weightlifter when I was a kid, but you could see me struggling as I'm walking..."

Her character in 1962's costumer, *TARAS BULBA*, was more conventional. Once again unencumbered with dialogue, she almost managed to seduce Tony Curtis who played a young cosack. Upon watching the tawdry on-screen foreplay, it was something of a surprise to learn that Curtis was not the actor with whom Marcus rehearsed. "Yul Brynner, Tony's co-star, stepped in and did the off-camera part because Tony had to take off. Tony was having all kinds of things going on in his personal life, so Yul is the one who worked with me. He was quite a gentleman and a wonderful person. Somebody saw Yul talking to me and made some kind of suggestive remark. Yul immediately came to my defense and asked that he apologize. Yul made me feel wonderful because, sometimes, people want to cheapen you because they have preconceived ideas. He had such a beautiful attitude and, at that

VITINA MARCUS

"Jonathan Harris was a well-trained actor and he knew it. He was helpful and giving of himself."

time, I was extremely appreciative of his gentlemanly way."

But Marcus' crowning achievement was her guest appearance in the aforementioned HAVE GUN, WILL TRAVEL series: "I felt very special about that part, and I also felt very challenged. I was pregnant with my first baby, Athena, and the rolling of the stagecoach made me a little nauseous. [Series star] Richard Boone somehow detected that. I enjoyed working with him very much. I enjoyed the experience."

"I felt the role, itself, was very special. The character was a Native American princess who was sent to the white man's school to be educated. She was returning home and encountered a lot of people who had regressive thoughts about her. She had dignity and intelligence, and she had a lot to face with people being prejudiced and resentful towards her, because people wanted to consider her below them in worth. They were confused and resentful because she wore beautiful white lady's clothing, she had higher education and character, and there was a great conflict towards her that she had to handle."

The episode, related almost entirely from the princess' point of view, was broadcast during an era when the TV industry was less sensitive about developing "non-caucasian" roles. Furthermore, the media insisted that "Father" knew best and Mom was a Stepford Wife who wore a string of pearls while vacuuming the carpet. It's likely that Marcus' "most challenging role"

influenced her radio show "We decided to do *The Feminine Feeling*," she explained, "because we realized that women are very rarely taught what to look for in a man, and men are not taught how to deal with women in the best possible way. This goes on generation after generation, with a lot of children not having a concept of what feelings and partnerships are really about. People don't spend any time mind-sharing. I don't say all people. I say that many people get together in haste and follow their physical impuls-



T. En route to Atlantis, Marcus guides *THE LOST WORLD* going through a "quirky, highly unusual" set design. **R.** Playing a victim in *TARAS BULBA*, Marcus was grateful to her co-star "Red Bryner was a performer, he had such a beautiful attitude."

es—but, unfortunately, they leave out the mental, emotional and spiritual.

"I believe in seeking a balance between the physical and the mental and emotional and spiritual bodies. It's a major thing in the news about the ELF [electromagnetic frequencies]. It's all over the planet and especially in a city like Las Vegas, where there's a lot of light and a lot of electricity. It's good to get into nature, whenever one has a chance, to keep balance. This is something that we have to continuously work on because our environment is full of stress and frequencies and toxicities."

Her quest for balance sometimes navigated Marcus into situations that a more provincial populace might find controversial. "It was in the '70s, at the convention in Giant Rock. At the time, very little was said about space-



ships and this was a place where UFOs were supposed to have landed. There were people going around with all kinds of things to say and it started to open up my mind. I developed a reputation at the time for being somewhat 'off'."

"When you start thinking about things ahead of time, you always pay a price. At first, people's reactions upset [me] a little bit. I don't get upset anymore. That's because, a few years later, everything I studied started to appear in the news and TV. And, all of a sudden, the public wanted to know more."

After a long, thoughtful pause, Marcus concluded her personal discourse with, "You know, it's interesting that a lot of so-called 'science fiction' is found to have a lot of truth in it. There are stories circulating now that an entrance exists to an unexplored place called Center Earth, where there is supposed to be life—just like in *THE LOST WORLD*." □

In homage to producer Irvin Allen, Marcus was reacquainted with Jonathan Harris at the Museum of TV & Radio, since 1997.



SHEENA'S IRISH McCALLA

ODYSSEY OF A PIN-UP MODEL: FROM TV'S JUICY JUNGLE HEROINE TO SCI-FI SCHLOCKSTER TO A LAUDED PAINTER.

BY DAN SCAPPEROTTI

America, 1955: the age of chastity Howdy Doody reminded us to attend church, the hottest pair in Hollywood was Martin and Lewis, *FATHER KNOWS BEST* was one of the country's most popular sitcoms and *THE MICKEY MOUSE CLUB* was making its TV debut. Then she came along. Cast as SHEENA, QUEEN OF THE JUNGLE, Irish McCalla—a voluptuous blonde clad in a snakeskin, leopard skin swimsuit—frad adolescent hormones. In a job at “togetherness” duds sat with their teenage offspring during each episode—but communication was limited to the male co-stars silently ogling McCalla's physique until the final credit crawl, when Pop would ritualistically say, “Don't forget to wash up for dinner.” McCalla corrupted the whole Mickey Mouse morality. She was the catalyst for impure thoughts.

A Christmas baby, McCalla was born in 1928. Growing up in the frigid wilds of rural Nebraska, her primary interests were art and “wanting to go where it never had snow,” McCalla recounts. “So I moved to California. My brother drove me out there when he came back from the war, and my mother drove out with us. We found a nice boarding house for me and a waitress job, which is good because you eat right away and the tips helped financially.”

McCalla became fixated with the warm, sunbathed Malibu beaches, an environ-

ment that was inaccessible at home. “I was living in Santa Monica and part-time in Malibu,” recalls McCalla. “My friends and I loved the beach. They said beach kids wouldn't amount to anybody, but most of us amounted to somebody. Johnny Weissmuller and Ben Chapman, who played *THE CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON* [land scenes], taught me to skin dive. Ben was a friend of the man who owned the place where we used to go skin diving. I had a crush on Ben. I got engaged to him, but we never got married. He was a tall Tahitian fella.”

While skin diving for lobster and abalone on a chilly winter afternoon, the 17-year-old beauty was approached by freelance photographer Bob Wallace. McCalla struck some poses.



When Wallace later suffered a fatal heart attack, his widow sold all of the shutterbug's negatives to the Globe Photos syndicate. “One cold day in New York, they published this picture of me in a bikini, holding up a lobster,” grins McCalla, “—which is not one of my favorite pictures. In those days, a bikini was not so brief. The picture's caption said, *This is what they're doing in California today*—you know, rubbing it in for the New Yorkers—*This is Irish McCalla skin diving in Califor-*

nia. And that's all the information they had. Globe Syndicate had one heck of a time trying to find me, because I lived in Santa Monica rooming house, and I didn't have my own phone. One way or another, Globe got ahold of me. They had got exclusive and gave me \$100 a month. At the time, I was working for 82 cents an hour at the Douglas Aircraft factory making wing nuts for airplanes and plastic molds. I was working the night shift so I could go to



F: SHE DEMONS, a '59 horror film shot on a "poorly run" budget. "They paid me \$500 big dollars to be in that," recalls Monroe.
M: "I was type-cast after SHEENA."
F: "I was well-known as a pin-up model. I just fell into it because of my figure."



A photo of Michaela McCalla, living-up a lifestyle, started her modeling career. "The Globe syndicate realized that I was an exclusive, offering me \$100 a month."

the beach in the daytime. At [that amount] an hour, you can imagine that \$100 looked like a lot. I signed the contract with them and they sold me to all the different magazines, especially *Night and Day*—where I became a fixture—and the other pin-up magazines." Debuting in *Night and Day's* August '50 issue, Mc-

Calla personally "came up with the stories that revolved around the photo spreads. You know, stuff like *Irish goes sailing*—or skiing or swimming. We'd get a pair of sand skiers and I'd go sand skiing. *Irish does this—and Irish does that.*" That way, they had a reason to print several pictures of me at once. I don't remember how long I was under contract...probably three or four years.

But the hyperbole turned into a franchise. "We made \$6,000! I bought a camera, a new cashmere coat and supported myself for some time because the company printed pictures and gave me \$.85 a shot to sign them. I just fell into it because of my figure. People had asked me to pose before, but I didn't know them and I'd say 'No.' I knew Bob [Wallace] and he was happily married, and was a good photographer and, with him, it was strictly business."

Globe negotiated an offer to engage McCalla, the company's most profitable exponent, as a Las Vegas showgirl. "They offered to pay me more if I would do some advertising for them on the radio because, back then, I was well known as a pin-up model," says McCalla. "Again, this was at the end of the Korean War, I think, because I was doing some USO shows for the soldiers as well. I had just found out that I was pregnant with my first child, so I wouldn't be able to stay too long in the show. I didn't start

showing for a long time because I'm very tall and I was so slim. I was performing at the Flamingo, which at that time was the last casino on the strip. Next to the Flamingo was a place all the showgirls called The Barracks because that was where we slept. There were none of the great, big, tall buildings. As a showgirl, you parade around and wear those beautiful costumes with the big hoedresses. In those days, we wore costumes—we didn't go naked. You stand behind the singers and the other acts. You were scenery. Sherrie North was the captain of the dancers at that time. Not long after I left the Flamingo, Sherrie left. Twentieth-Century Fox was having trouble with Marilyn Monroe, and they decided to scare her by bringing Sherrie in. She was a great dancer."

Pregnancy expanded McCalla's already ample endowments. Her bust line inflated from 39.5" to 41.25". "Oh, it was just so big, I had a very large bust," she

Wind River Women, illustrated by Ms. McCalla. "When I was SHERIE, I'd take my free time to study artwork."



moans. "The waist was still small. I had a 24-inch waist so when I started gaining a little weight, it wasn't noticeable. As a matter of fact, I never did buy what I call 'get pregnant clothes.' I just wore loose blouses."

Globe organized a shoot that archivists regard as McCalla's most celebrated project. The spread was titled "Irish By Four Different Artists." Landed glamour/pin-up photographer Bruno Bernard (7/3) snapped pictures of McCalla, pin-up artist Alberta Vargas rendered her image on canvas, another craftsman constructed an ice effigy and Sala Munich sculpted a bronze bust.

Prior to the *Globe* gig, McCalla had already been introduced to Vargas "at a Miss California beauty contest. I didn't win but Vargas was one of the judges. I was very broke, and he asked me if I would pose for him. I had always copied Vargas drawings when I was a girl, and I'd trade them to the gas stations for gasoline. I admired Vargas. He was such a gentle person. He treated you like you were a beautiful rose, not like you were a nude body. He would see the highlights of your skin and be taught me some things about painting, about water colors and stuff I never tried. He showed me how he painted, and that was all very interesting to me. Those resultant pictures appeared in a *Night and Day* magazine. I was wearing a one-piece bathing suit at the time, and I hated it. It used to pull up in the crotch and down in the bust. I'm very tall, and they never made one piece bathing suits tall enough for you. I was 5'9 1/2" which was rare in those days. I was happy to see the bikini come in, so I could have some bare space to move around."

The bronze "big bust" became part of the family. "Sala Munich, the sculptor, gave it to me," says McCalla. "My youngest son was just a baby, and he was always patting that bust

IRISH McCALLA

"He said, 'You look just like Sheena,' and then advised me I'd need photos. So I went to Bruno Bernard. He shot pictures of me in a leopard skin bikini like Sheena wore in the comic strip."



McCalla as SHEENA, QUEEN OF THE JUNGLE, a 1955/56 TV series based on a comic strip, created by S. M. Iger & Will Eisner, that originated in the late 1930s.

and saying, 'Nice mommy. Nice mommy.' I said, 'One of these days, somebody is going to come in and think he's strange.' So Sala cut it off at the head for me. I gave the books to Tam Kelly, a pin-up photographer who was always asking me, 'Why won't you model nude for me?' His modeled nude for Vargas!" I told him I wouldn't do that for photographers."

Kelly did persuade Marilyn Monroe to strike a nude pose for "Golden Dreams," indisputably the most popular pin-up in history. Back in the '50s, he told McCalla that a certain producer was not among the phonies disguised as studio executives. "Don't hang up on him, Irish, like you usually do!" Kelly cautioned. "He then

told me that they were going to do a comic strip, *Sheena, Queen of the Jungle*, as a TV series," recalls McCalla. "They had called him to ask which actresses he thought qualified for the role. He told them that I would be perfect. And he told me, 'You're athletic and you look just like Sheena!' He also advised me that I'd need some pictures, so I went to [Bruno] Bernard because he had photographed me before. I hired him to do some pictures of me in a leopard skin bikini like Sheena used to wear in the comic strip."

McCalla was a reluctant actress. She applied dramatic license whenever necessary, more for commercial practicality than creative impetus. "I didn't want to be

an actress," she admits, "but I was divorced at that time, and had two young kids to support, and I didn't want to be a waitress. I'd been a waitress, and working in the factory wouldn't support us. Because I was a model, I did a few small things like playing models on TV shows—again, only for my looks."

"When I became a TV star, I worked for \$365 a week and so did most of the other actors I knew. I made most of my money doing personal appearances, and that's thanks to TV actors Bill Williams and Jack Mahoney, both of whom had a series before me [ADVENTURES OF KIT CARSON and THE RANGE RIDER, respectively]. They told me, 'Look, [the TV producers] are going to offer you something in the \$300 range, and you tell them that's not enough. They're not going to give you any more because you're not a well known star, but you tell them you'll sign it if you get your 'personal appearance rights.' In those days, the studios didn't understand how much you could make on those appearances."

"You could make a thousand dollars or so. Mother's Cookies and Dad's Root Beer were some of my sponsors. They'd fly me to the east or the midwest and pay me so much to go to a grocery store, or market, where their stuff was sold. I'd sign autographs, and go on television in that city or that town. And that's how I made my money, just wandering around. I went to other countries, too. I went to Australia and Japan. The funny thing is that the girl who dubbed me in Japanese was a better voice, I felt, than the one that dubbed me in Spanish. Let's face it. Could a tall, busty blonde, with a chimpanzee, prove equally popular in Spanish countries? I got off the plane in Puerto Rico and Cuba, and I felt like Elvis Presley. There were thousands of people just standing there at the airport. It was unbeliev-

able."

But the starlet was unnerved—scared!—when she initially reported to the SHEENA set. "I can thank the crew of the pilot film for getting me through it," grins McCalla. "They were like the older guys I knew while growing up. They treated me well and later some of them told me, 'You didn't come on acting like a big star who had just gotten the part. You came on showing you were a little confused.' I didn't know what a 'pan shot' was. I didn't know what to do in a close-up. Every mistake I made was on film, because I knew nothing about it. When we were waiting to rehearse, one of the guys would take me aside and explain things to me so the director wouldn't yell at me. I would get nervous and go home crying every night. My advice to aspiring actresses is something I learned from experience: 'Be good to the crew because they'll be good to you.'"

The series' budget constraints prompted an athletic McCalla to perform her own stunts, at least until "the injury." While shooting the show in Mexico, the ingenue was stricken with amoebic dysentery, a dreaded illness commonly known as Montezuma's revenge. "They had a rope covered with vine, and I swung down to go into the crotch of this big tree leaning out over the river," McCalla explains. "A boy would swing first so I could watch and judge my distance. I could see that I had to hold the rope higher than he did, because he would hit the tree. But, when he hit, he was wearing his heavy boots."

"I was on a high platform on a floating raft, tied to the tree in the river. I started to swing, but because I had been so sick and I didn't realize how weak I had gotten, I couldn't hold my weight that far up that vine. As I headed toward the tree, I knew that I was going to hit it with my torso and face, so I pulled my knees up and I



The globe syndicate encouraged McCalla to work as a Vegas showgirl. "I performed at the Flamingo. In these days, we wore costumes, we didn't go naked."

hit on my knees. I was back and blood from the knees down. I started falling down toward the raft and I thought, 'Please God, let somebody catch me before I drown.' Luckily, they did catch me. I pulled ligaments in my left elbow and hurt my back and smashed up my knees."

Returning to the States for recovery, McCalla was greeted at the airport by a press agent who slipped the wounded starlet a velvet

sling. "The producers subsequently hired a stuntman," says McCalla. "They couldn't find a girl tall enough down there in Mexico, so they got a trapeze artist. The funny part was that we would tease that poor man to death. He'd put on his costume and—as he put his falsies in—either leading man Chris Drake or I would say, 'No, no, no... just a little to the left. No, a little to the right.' And he'd get so embarrassed. You could tell

when it was him because he ran more like a girl, and I ran more like a boy. One of the reasons I was hired was because I could run across rough ground. Coming from a small country town, I could run across the ground just like a boy does. I could do short swings and I did my own swimming, of course, because you couldn't fake that."

SHEENA was supposed to literally swing in Kenya. But the atmosphere of the Mexican jungle in Cuernavaca, and economic reality, drew the producers to south of the border locales. But shooting in the torrid heat, during monsoon season, took its toll. "We often had to quit because of rain," McCalla nods. "My makeup would have to be redone several times a day because I would just sweat it off... my mother would have a fit if I said that, make that because I would just have perspired it off. It wasn't dense jungle, it was more open jungle. And there was the river there and they could do it cheap. It was produced by the Nassour brothers in conjunction with Rodriguez Productions in Mexico. That way, they could run the film into Mexico City and run it at their studio and stuff. I used to watch it on the movie."

Undoubtedly, McCalla's abbreviated jungle tape—hot stuff by conservative '50s standards—induced a legion of male teenagers to check-out her tan. Beyond the series' 26 episodes, that core audience remained faithful to the reruns. "Today my costume would be old fashioned," says an amused McCalla. "It was the only costume really, except for ice skaters and dancers, that was showing that much skin. It was a one-piece costume and we were very careful not to show any cleavage. God, if I leaned forward to track an animal or something, they'd say, 'Sheena, por favor!' and I'd say, 'The boobs are showing aren't they?' 'Si. Si. Is not good.' And I'd have to



McCalla was "discovered" while "I was making wing nuts at the Douglas Aircraft factory. I worked the night shift so I could go to the beach in the daytime."

turn slightly away from the camera so you couldn't see, or else move the shoulders up a little so you wouldn't show a little cleavage. With my bust that was difficult not to do."

Two years after *SHEENA* shut down, McCalla was cast in *SHE DEMONS*, one of a surfeit of low-budget sci-fi films that was pro-

duced as filler for double-bills. Richard E. Cunha, director of poverty row quickies (*GIANT FROM THE UNKNOWN*, *FRANKENSTEIN'S DAUGHTER*), turned to McCalla for marquee value. The ingenue was cast as Jerrie Turner, a spoiled heiress who's shipwrecked on an island occupied by a Nazi scientist and

IRISH McCALLA

"Tom Kelly was always asking me, 'Won't you model nude for me? You modeled nude for Alberto Vargas.' Alberto treated you like you were a beautiful rose, not like a nude body.'"

human guinea pigs (i.e. captive women) genetic experiments, gone awry, breed a race of predatory "she demons." Riddled with dialogue that begs for a Golden Turkey award ("That was your fatal mistake, American swine!"), the film was produced on a poverty row budget (\$65,000).

"*SHE DEMONS* was made by a small studio," explains McCalla. "They wanted a name for their heroine—even though I had become typecast as Sheena—and they paid me 1,500 'big' dollars to play that. It took 8-10 days to shoot it down at Paradise Cove, and part of it in the studios. We didn't dare change a word of [the script] because Richard Cunha had written it, too. The two stunt men were great guys and they also played the German Nazis. My younger sister Flo came to watch me on the set, and one of the stunt men got a crush on her right away. He was standing at the top of the stairs, where they have the volcano, and he had to do a fall. But he was yelling, 'Hey Flo! Flo look at me! Look at me, I'm going to do a fall.' It was so funny."

McCalla resisted demands to perform a nude scene. "I had an argument with the producer," she recalls, "because he wanted me to take off my bra, and go nude for a foreign version of the film—they wouldn't see anything, but it just wasn't right. It's one thing to do it for Alberto Vargas, and another thing to do it in front of a crew and people and on film. I read in a magazine, later, where [Cunha] said, 'Irish McCalla didn't want to take off her bra because she had a child.' I wrote back to the editor of

that magazine and said, 'Well for [Cunha's] information, I have two children and my bust looks very good.' I was doing pin-up modeling, and I sent him some recent pictures of myself out of magazines. I wrote, 'You can see that I hadn't lost my figure.'

"I thought Cunha's quote was tacky. It was bad enough that I had posed [nude] for Vargas, that was embarrassing enough. I had two sons and I told Cunha, when he wanted me to do the nude scene, that I wasn't about to do it or I'd risk friends of my two sons saying, 'Ela, ha! I saw your mama naked.' I thought about things like that.

"Later, I played a nun in James Cavell's *FIVE GATES TO HELL* (1959) and I thought that would get me out of the Sheena stereotype. But it didn't. Then I played in a western called *FIVE BOLD WOMEN* ('59) and that didn't get me out of it, either. Peo-

SHEENA McCalla w/ adolescent Chino. "As a TV star, I earned \$395 a week, & so did most of the actors I knew."



ple said, 'Well we can't take you seriously because you're done SHEENA.'"

During the same year, producer Albert Zugsmith—whose prestigious films (TOUCH OF EVIL, THE INCREDIBLE SHRINKING MAN) are overshadowed by his drive-in legacy (FANNY HILL, SEX KITTENS GO TO COLLEGE, CONFESSIONS OF AN OPIUM EATER)—offered McCalla a starring role in THE BRAT GENERATION. But with strings attached. "I will never forget Zugsmith's line," she remembers. "He said, '[The actor] will rip-off your bra for the European version.' I said, 'SHEENA is played in Europe, it's played all through South America and I don't think that would be right.' He said, 'The rape scene will be done in good taste.' I asked him, 'How can you rape anybody in good taste?' So I asked him to let me play the part of the mother and I'd dye my hair dark. So that's what I played, Fay Span's mother. I didn't get the leading role but Zugsmith wanted to use

IRISH McCALLA

"The producer said, 'The actor will rip off your bra for the film's European version. [But] this rape scene will be done in good taste.' I asked, 'How can you rape anybody in good taste?'"



7. "They never made a place holding suits tall enough for me. I was happy to see the skirt come in so I could have been space to move around." 8. A critic noted, "For adolescent boys, McCalla's voluptuous Sheena is something else!"



my name, which was still fairly big. So he let me have a small role." Balance of the eclectic cast included Mammie Van Doren (5:8), Vampire and Louis Armstrong.

Flashback to McCalla's other driving ambition, while growing up in Nebraska's hinterlands: maturing into an artist. "I always drew things from the time I

was a little kid," she says. "When I was Sheena, I used to take my free time and I'd study art. When I was in the jungle, I would paint pictures just for fun. And I would paint pictures of the natives. The Indians would come and watch us because I was an oddity. Here was this lady in long, blonde

hair, wearing a little bit of an outfit and carrying a chimpanzee. I had my first art show after I got home. I knew a lot of people came because I was Sheena, but I didn't care. I did a lot of barn paintings and landscapes because I knew the countryside. People would say 'Hey you're really good.'

But they'd say it in such surprise that I thought they didn't expect me to be any good. I could tell by their tone of voice. It's the same kind of thing when a guy invites you out, and you're sitting there having dinner and you're talking and, all of a sudden, he says, 'You're really intelligent.'"

Years ago, Pat Nixon purchased one of McCalla's seascapes paintings which was later exhibited in the western wing of the White House. "I also had one in the Cowgirl Hall of Fame," she says proudly. "I belonged to the Women Artists of the American West for a long time. I don't belong anymore since I had these operations, because I haven't had the energy to paint very much. Most of my paintings are sold in Scottsdale, Arizona. My favorites are Blossoms Soft, a painting of my daughter-in-law and my first granddaughter when she was a baby, and Mail Order Bride which was terribly successful."

One of McCalla's favorite pastimes is attending conventions and greeting her admirers. "I'm so old I'm now part of memorabilia," she laughs. Although several seasons of surgical therapy have curtailed her appearances, she's ready to hit the road again. "I never made any money off the leopard skin in those days, and now it's helping to support me," she explains. "But my art work supports me mostly."

It's wonderful that that old leopard skin has got me back to see my friends, and I had no idea how important Sheena was to the children of that day. Grown men in business suits come up to me and say, 'I was in love with you.' I was in dangerous surgery in '84, which was publicized very well down in Phoenix, and I got lots of cards and flowers. One of my favorite cards, which represented a lot of them, was from a fella who created it on his computer. It said, 'Please get well, Sheena. You were a wonderful part of my childhood.' □

THE LEGEND CONTINUES

BACK AS A '90s WOMAN, SHEENA IS SHEDDING HER BIKINI.

BY DAN SCAPPEROTTI

The Golden Age's prototypical comic book was predominantly male driven: it was all about testosterone and super powers. While the distaff members occasionally rose to the occasion, their numbers are few. *Wonder Woman* may be the most popular, what with a franchise that includes a couple of TV pilots and an indefinitely postponed movie adaptation. But close on the Amazon's heels is *Sheena, Queen of the Jungle*, a blonde crusader who literally swung through the African wilderness. Created in 1937 by S.M. Iger and *The Spirit's* own Will Eisner, Sheena was initially rendered into visibility as an Editors Press Service strip. Only one year later, under the auspices of writer William Thomas and artist Mort Meskin, Sheena was featured in *Junior Comics*. The feature proved so successful that its longevity spanned the next 15 years. A comic book, developed solely as a vehicle for the jungle siren, materialized on newsstands from 1942 to 1953. Critical to Sheena's prosperity was an audience of teenage boys who were more preoccupied with the brevity of her leopard skin ensemble than her chapsa.

A 1955-'56 TV adaptation, *SHEENA, QUEEN OF THE JUNGLE*, was short-lived (26 episodes) but Inish McCalla, who played the title role, is still actively venerated by two generations of fans. The blonde warrior was incarnated on the big screen in 1984's *SHEENA*, but the reception was down-



Charlie's Angel! Tanya Roberts as SHEENA, the leap '84 adaptation of the comic strip. Roberts' performance earned her a Razzie nomination (Worst Actress).

right uncivilized. Producer Paul Aratow noted, "The original Sheena was a racist, a killer of endangered species. Our character is contemporary with the action taking place in Africa today." Oops! Audiences suspected Sheena would more likely carry a briefcase than a spear. The heroine's comic book adventures were inclined to be more pulp than PC, and jurisprudence in the jungle prompted audiences, of all races, to steer clear of the bonafide Tanya Roberts, formerly one of *CHARLIE'S ANGELS* (1980-'81), was cast as SHEENA. Though he described the film as "just plain awful," critic Leonard Maltin noted that Roberts "looks great as the queen of jungle juggle." Other critics were more punitive. Her performance earned Roberts a Razzie nomination for Worst Actress. Two years later, she earned another Razzie nomination (Worst Actress, again) for her role as 007's squeeze in *A VIEW TO*

KILL. Roberts recently relocated to the urban jungle via her role as "Midge Fincioth" on *That '70s Show*, a Fox sitcom.

Earlier this year, Aratow offered Sheena's publishing rights to the Ministry of film, an L.A. unit that has produced a couple of movies (*EMBRACE OF THE VAMPIRE*) and made-for-cable TV shows (*EROTIC CONFESSIONS*). The company called upon London Night Comics' president, Everette Hartsoe, to restore Sheena to the comic book medium. Through the grapevine, fans heard that the bombshell—in all her leopard skin buster—would be back to form. But something got lost in the translation.

"Paul Aratow was interesting in trying to revamp the character," explained Hartsoe. "I sat down with Paul to cook up a Sheena that was best suited to the '90s. She's quite different from the 'Golden Age' Sheena. Instead of Africa, she's in South America. She's a

Harvard grad, a scientist studying the ecosystem and trying to protect the resources of the world, as well as the rain forest and the people and animals who live in South America. The villagers find themselves victims of the billion dollar corporations that want to rape the resources of the South American jungle and the Amazon. She does a lot of fighting in the jungle and in the corporation board rooms. Sheena is defiantly a woman of the '90s. She's beautiful, she's business and she can kick your ass."

The bottom line. Sheena's indelible trademark, the leopard skin bikini, is intact. Right? "She doesn't wear the bikini swimsuit," said Hartsoe. "She basically has a new costume. In this first issue, you see one of many different costumes because she's a woman and

continued on page 68

Cover art notwithstanding, London Night's modern Sheena ditched the bikini & fights in the concrete jungle.





FIGURE STUDY

CAST AS XENA'S ALLY, THIS ACTRESS TALKS SEX APPEAL.

COMMENTARY BY SHEERI RAPPAORT & PHOTOGRAPHY BY JAN DEEN

Let's set the record straight. In my previous article for *Pomme Fatales* ("Directing LITTLE WITCHES," 5-12), yours truly chastised gratuitous sex and nudity in the media. So there's a likelihood you're probably perusing the poses I struck for this *Figure Study* thing. "Well, Sheeri Rappaport, you're mostly naked in these pics. Are you some kind of a hypocrite?" These pictures actually serve as a limited exposition regarding how I view the artistic play of

nudity. Not skin. The process of shooting this *Figure Study* scene required the choreography of light, shadow and the sensual awareness of not just myself, but the photographer and his assistant. We developed a character: an innocent but oppressed post-adolescent, whose self-discovery springs forth with a slow-kindling fire that would eventually turn nuclear. It was a very private and sensitive time for me to be an actress on these pages, not a bikini carwash girl in cheesecloth.

"I play 'Otara' in a couple of episodes that opened XENA'S new season," says Rappaport. "She's a 18-year-old Amazon warrior who's blocked out her past with Xena. But they rewrite & beat the crap out of everyone."





"Playing the lusty girl
among a coven of
LITTLE WITCHES
(8/12) was good and
hot," notes Rappaport. "It was a pro-
fessional experience—
learning to adapt to
budget constraints—
but I didn't like the
explosive aspects.
Lately, I've played a
recurrent role as the
TTH HEAVEN series."

There should always be some secret in photos that specifically focus on human lust. C'mon—there's nothing new to the supposition that mystery is far more sexy than laying it all out on the table. Whatever is communicated, from behind the eyes of the subject, can evoke a much more profound and challenging reaction from the reader than the average wank material.

Let me cite examples of actresses who, though cast within an erotic tableau, subverted all of the softcore clichés. I call them "The Lucky Seven"—women who have elegantly translated "sexy" into everything but an R-rated platitude.

1. Glenn Close. An actress whom I consider to be among the next millennium's matriarchs of sex. Carrying herself with the allure of a wise, calculating woman, she could effortlessly reduce machismo into schizoidism. Remember her flirtatious dance with Michael Douglas in *FATAL ATTRACTION*? Or her tarty temptress in *DANGEROUS LIAISONS*? She has redefined eroticism into cerebral foreplay: sex is a residual by-product of thought, music and emotion. Whew!

2. Meg Ryan. She's so bereft of Hollywood and pretension—and, apparently, so oblivious to her own sex appeal—that some scribes have described her as a "tomboy"! Give me a break. While her peers strain to be sexy, Ryan needs only to unaffectedly turn on the pout, the stare and the smile. And she kisses her leading men with an impassioned panache that shuts out everything around them. Now that's hot!

3. Linda Fiorentino. Her voice is velvet infused with a tormented soul. Pure chocolate, Fiorentino is anatomy to the BAY-WATCH syndrome of juggle and tan lines. Her throaty vocals complement a personality that shows zero signs of vulnerability. Even while performing overtly erotic scenes—*JADE*, for in-

stance—Fiorentino is in control. And yet, while appearing to acknowledge the "naughtiness" of her character's promiscuity, she shades the consummation with near-subliminal suffering.

4. Madeleine Stowe. Want to sample a lovemaking scene that would appeal to more than gynecologists? Check out *LAST OF THE MOHICANS* (1992): not a boob nor a buttock in the joint. This mutual submission of love between Stowe and the wonderful Daniel Day-Lewis was expressed through their hands, eyes, body language. And yet there's more heat and sexual metaphor than in the average smoker. Every time I see them in that love tryst, I find myself literally holding my breath. And who better to express such poetry than a woman who says so much—without articulating a single word?

5. Sophie Marceau. Sick of *TITANIC*? Get thee to a video store quickly, and screen an unedited copy of *BRAVEHEART*. The tortured, short-lived love shared between Mel Gibson and Marceau seems improbable; societal precepts would prohibit such a relationship. But the actors strike-up a rapport that's plausible and their lovemaking—though not belabored—is intense. In a montage, Marceau walks around the palace "thinking" of her lover; she has a blissful expression on her face, staring into the sky, while running her hands along the bodice of her dress. She is in love, in ecstasy, and we can see and feel it with her.

6. Helena Bonham Carter. Here's another woman whose voice, even if disembodied from its host, would be a soulful entity. If Fiorentino resonates milk chocolate, Carter is lither-sweet. Her speech is laced with a declaration of lustiness that cuts and flows, and it's lined with an endearing British accent. Carter is her voice. She has these huge, enigmatic

"We developed a character: an innocent, oppressed post-adolescent. Her self-discovery is like a slow-kindling fire that turns nuclear. Not a bikini carwash girl."



While posing, Rappaport summarized women's roles ("I loved Todd Calabrese's character in *MURDER'S WEDDING*") & the afterlife ("It's imaginative, pretty").

brown eyes that can cry innocence or seductively pierce you. They're set in the angular planes of her ivory face—a strong jaw, sophisticated cheekbones, a very sincere nose and lips that always seem ready to betray her innermost thoughts. Altogether, her face, voice, and soul merge with tempestuous impact; Carter can tame uncivil predators and invigorate the sexually repressed. She

is a beautiful, intelligent chameleon. Recommended viewing: *MERLIN* (Carter plays Morgan Le Fay), *HAMLET* (1990), *THE WINGS OF THE DOVE* (she was Oscar-nominated), *LADY JANE* and *MIGHTY APHRODITE*.

7. Uma Thurman. If you adhere to a provincial "supermodel" barometer, her face would likely not be gauged as classically beautiful. Thurman, however,

doesn't try to be sexy nor does she lean on cosmetic embellishments; she's naturally sexy. Her tall height, which supports a lovely and lean physique, translates as power to some, intimidation to others: it's among the perks of her sexual dominion. There is a very interesting polarity between the upper and the lower lips of her mouth. The lower is pouty and unbridled, replete with a playful, coquettish tongue. Between the upper lip and forehead is a significantly more cunning stimulus that she carefully monitors. The voice: intelligent, sometimes manipulative, brimming with youth. Her nose may appear somewhat formidable, but it's actually in harmony with her unconventional beauty. Her eyes...ooh, her eyes. Absolutely intoxicating. Once you recover from the hangover of staring into those seductive, liquid pools, you realize this actress was the perfect embodiment of Botticelli's Venus in *THE ADVENTURES OF BARON MUNCHHAUSEN*. She's all about love, trouble and beauty. Uma Thurman is erotic.

8. Sheri Rappaport. Okay. So, maybe it's not "The Lucky Seven." Why don't we just change it to "The Eighth Wonder of the World"? That's a pretty modest description of me, don't you think? Anyway, if I don't afford myself some latitude for a laudatory review, who else will? After all, it was my self-confidence that landed me on the stage so that audiences could apply their own perception to my intelligence, creative impetus and, yes, sex appeal. Not unlike the aforementioned seven actresses, I love what I do. And that's another unvoiced secret: it's that unyielding passion and drive makes an actress so alluring.

Well, the art gallery is closed. Let's reunite next year. Until then, please tell me: what do you think is sexy? □



Self-love: Jacqueline Lovell plays roles as diverse as the Garden Girl, above (shown for a 1987 documentary) and THE KILLER EYE's flame [J]. Refraining from nude roles, her flesh exposure was reserved for her books.

FATALE ATTRACTIONS

continued from page 4

piece," says Morgan. "I play this character, Georgia, who's one of the house whores. She's quite a spunky character."

Actress Jacqueline Lovell (5'3, 5-8)—the sci-fi seductress whose credits include **HEAD OF THE FAMILY**, **THE KILLER EYE** and **HIDEOUS**—is hiding ideas to roles that require nudity. "I've shut my web site down because it was all about my nude stuff, and I'm not doing that anymore," she says. "I got into religion. I went and showed my new boyfriend every single movie I've ever done, and going back and living through it all over again just made me sick. I don't want to do it anymore. I just can't take it anymore." Adhering to her more sanitized image, Lovell has cropped off her long hippie locks in favor of the latest short 'do. "I'm depressed now because my hair's all gone!" she laughs. "I hope something good comes out of all this, or I don't know what I'll do!" Never one to be deterred by contradiction, Lovell has written *Riding the Wave of Love*, which she describes as "a personal diary account of my trip to a nudist colony. It has 70 never-before-seen color photos." The booklet includes 15 pages of nude photos, plus ten pages of text. To own a copy (it's printed in an extremely limited edition), send a money order for \$30 to Jacqueline Lovell, 289 S. Robertson Blvd., #269, Beverly Hills, CA 90211. □

KATE MULGREW

continued from page 10

true love and, therefore, my suspicion is that it will be tragic love because, as we all know, love is tragic.

"I've never been as completely and utterly happy in a role. We work very long hours but it's so continually challenging. It's a love affair. I

love this group of people and I think, if nothing else, that's what radiates. If we were to lose any one person, I think it would be devastating to the future of the show. I'm very blessed to play this role, to find Janeway at this time in my life. I love her!" □

PAULA PRENTISS

continued from page 16

coffee and dishes on the floor with reckless abandon while ricocheting around the kitchen like a whirling dervish. "I loved that," Prentiss grins. "That was the most fun that I had in the whole film. I improvised a lot of that. I did the scene once and then [Farber] said, 'Let's do it again from here,' so I had to rebuild it again, even if it was to just shoot a close-up, so you can see something alive in here [points to her eyes]."

"So you perceived your character's duplicates as 'alive'?" I ask.

"She's real to herself. She doesn't know she's a robot."

"Do you think that men secretly want a perfect wife?" I ask.

"The dumb ones do," she grins. □

SHEENA

continued from page 47

any woman has a variable wardrobe—and I wanted Sheena to be the same way. In this particular issue, she's wearing a tight leather jumpsuit, a leopard skin vest and a utility belt to help her around the jungle."

Any other modifications? "Her hair's not blonde, anymore. It's red," replied Hartson. "The blonde jungle girl is sort of old. The imitators, like Amazon Girl, all use blonde hair as we wanted to definitely distinguish her and it just seemed to add strength to her character."

Since this '90s concept is so far separated from Sheena's familiar mythos, why not stick a new name on the character and begin from scratch? "Because Sheena does have a following," said Hartson. "It was just brought to me to re-vamp. Would Sheena work at the same old thing that's been done ten times over? I wouldn't buy it. You could create a new character, but if you have a name that has a strong following to begin with, let's do something different with her."

The first issue of the refurbished comic book was available in three different covers:



XENA: LESBIAN ISSUE

Dear Laura Schiff,
This weekend, I picked up the [7.8] issue of *Femme Fatales* with your article on XENA: WARRIOR PRINCESS. The pictures were great! Thanks. I thought, however, that you were a little obsessive with respect to the lesbian issue. As a devoted Xenite, the subplot contained in the XWP episodes is not a major part of any episode. The producers are aware of their large lesbian following and, since they aim to please all their viewers while not alienating others, they do include a subplot as that those who wish can get just about anything out of these stories that they want. Besides, since Ms. Lawless/Mrs. Tapert is not a lesbian, I was rather surprised that you covered that angle to such length. We all have our views on the show and our favorite episodes for whatever reasons there are a few of them that have fairly strong subtext material, and others that are more subtle. It's like throwing a large portion of the viewing audience a bone without offending all the others. I have nothing but praise for the producers, writers, actors and all the creative staff of XWP for being able to maintain this objective while still not lowering the quality of the episodes produced, thus keeping all viewers, regardless of sexual preference, happy and continually interested in what's coming next.

I thank you for the article on XWP and Renee O'Connor.

Ge Ge Aygar
Bowie, MD

MESSAGE TO RUSS MEYER: FROM A VET

Dear Mr. Meyer,
Your article (6/10/11) and background in the March issue of *FF* was most interesting and enjoyable.

Too bad you did not cover Glenn Miller's band on opening night at the Grand Ballroom in the Grand Hotel, Paris, France with chandeliers all over the huge ceiling, round tables all over with white table cloths and troops from England, U.S., New Zealand, Australia, Belgium and France sipping Coca-Cola for the first

time. I was on a three pass balleted in the Hotel.

The band was tuning for almost two hours before they played their first tune. We were all waiting for Glenn Miller, who never showed up. This was the period when we had three days of heavy fog in France and our pilots were grounded just about Christmas time 1944. It was a cold night, freezing weather with strong winds in the channel.

However, soon as it cleared up, I believe every plane we had was up in the sky fighting the enemy. To me, this appeared the beginning of the end of the war. Great and numerous advances were made over the enemy.

The Germans had already produced the ME-262 jet aircraft. A special squadron was organized, the airfield in France was extended and the pilots flew them over bringing the German machines along with our aircraft carrier, bringing them to Wright-Patterson Field, Ohio.

Keep up the good work and good luck to you.

Francesco Pao-Lewschio
El Paso, Texas

EXCERPTS

I enjoyed reading your interviews with "The Babe of BUFFY THE VAMPIRE SLAYER" (7.5). "But why did you leave out Kristine Sutherland (Joyce, Buffy's mother)? She's a babe, too!"

Ronald Jackowski
Linden, NJ

[Thanks for the suggestion. Until we profile Ms. Sutherland, check out *FF* 7.6. The issue includes an interview with Oscar nominee Candy Clark, who portrayed the Buffy's "sleazy, heavily tanned" mom in the '93 theatrical release.]

My favorite Full Moon femmes have been Denise Duff (SUBSPECIES II & III) and Roma De Ricci (PIT and THE PENDULUM w/ Lance Henriksen). But, lately, movie/video visibility of both actresses has been low. Are they still alive?

Jim Collins
Honolulu, Hawaii



Full Moon for Denise Duff is proof that life as a working woman hardly diminishes sex appeal. Here's a preview of her *FF* spread.

[Full Moon had "no comment" regarding Ms. De Ricci's winking act. *FF* appears to be her sole credit. Ms. Duff, arguably interviewed in *FF* 2.4, slipped into semi-retirement to raise her daughter, but she's back big time. During the past year, Duff shot *SUBSPECIES IV* and is currently "moonlighting" as a *FF* photographer. An updated interview and a lurid lay-out—staged and photographed by the actress—will debut in this magazine sometime in early '99.]

A while back, *FF* vowed to publish a profile on drive-in diva Claudia Jennings (GATOR BAIT, DEATHSPORT, TRUCK STOP WOMEN, etc.). I recall a news clip from way back to my recollection, she died tragically, at age 30, after auditioning as one of CHARLEY'S ANGELS.

When will the article on Jennings be printed, and who was interviewed for the piece?

Prany Jackson
London, England

[Art Bass' columnar has on Ms. Jennings—five years in development—will be published in mid-'99 among the profile's contributors: Roger Corman, Hugh Hefner, Jack Haley Jr., Allen Arkush, Evan Tubbins, Stephanie Rothman, Fred & Beverly Sebastian, Cosroe R-

alston, Sally Kirkland, Jillian Kenner, Barbara Leigh and dozens of others.]

FAN CLUBS

Send self-addressed and stamped envelopes, if you wish a reply.

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Julie Strain (2-2, 3-8)
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Kara Styler (7-6)
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Patricia Tallman (1-4 & 7-1)
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